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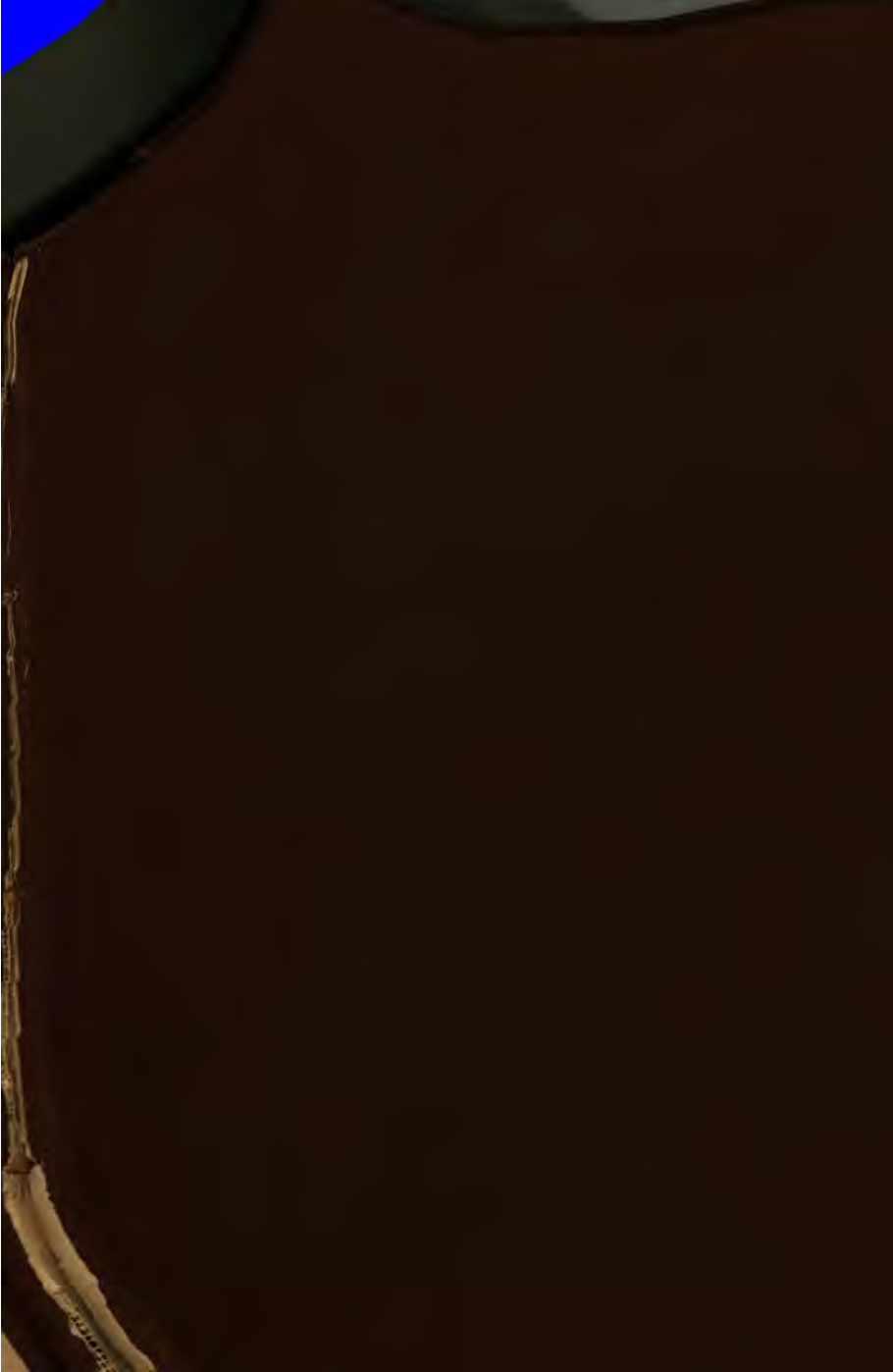


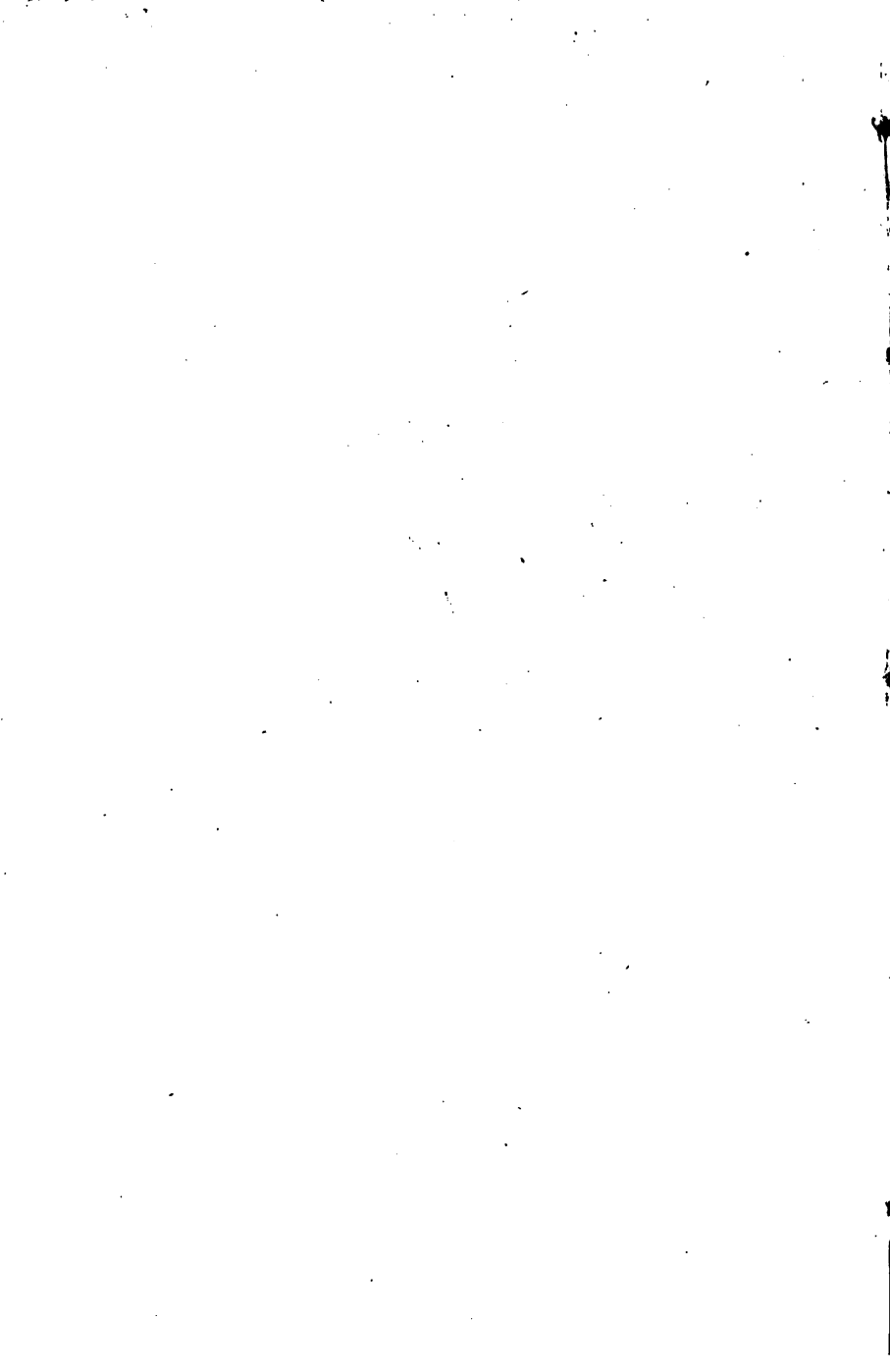
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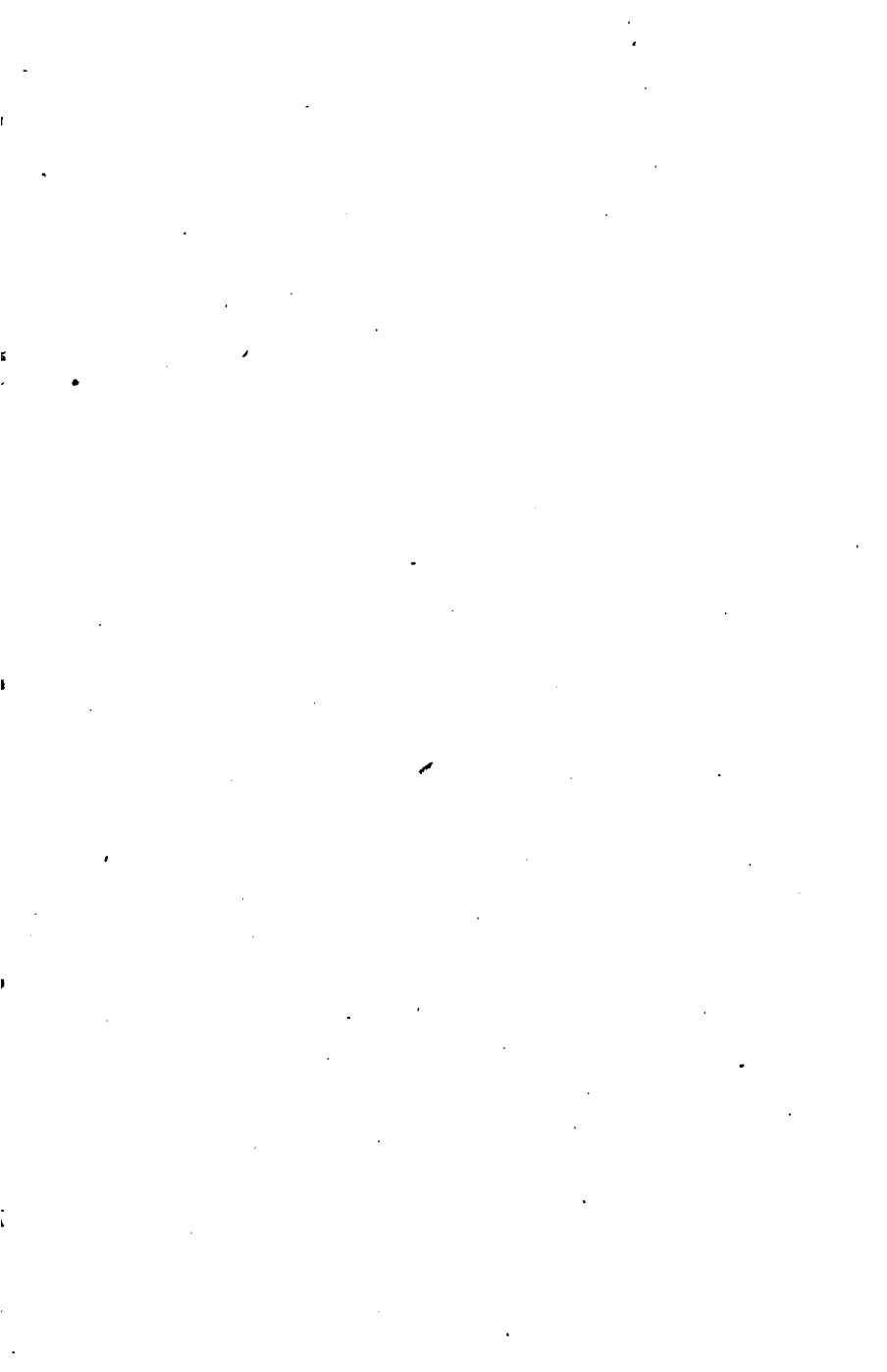


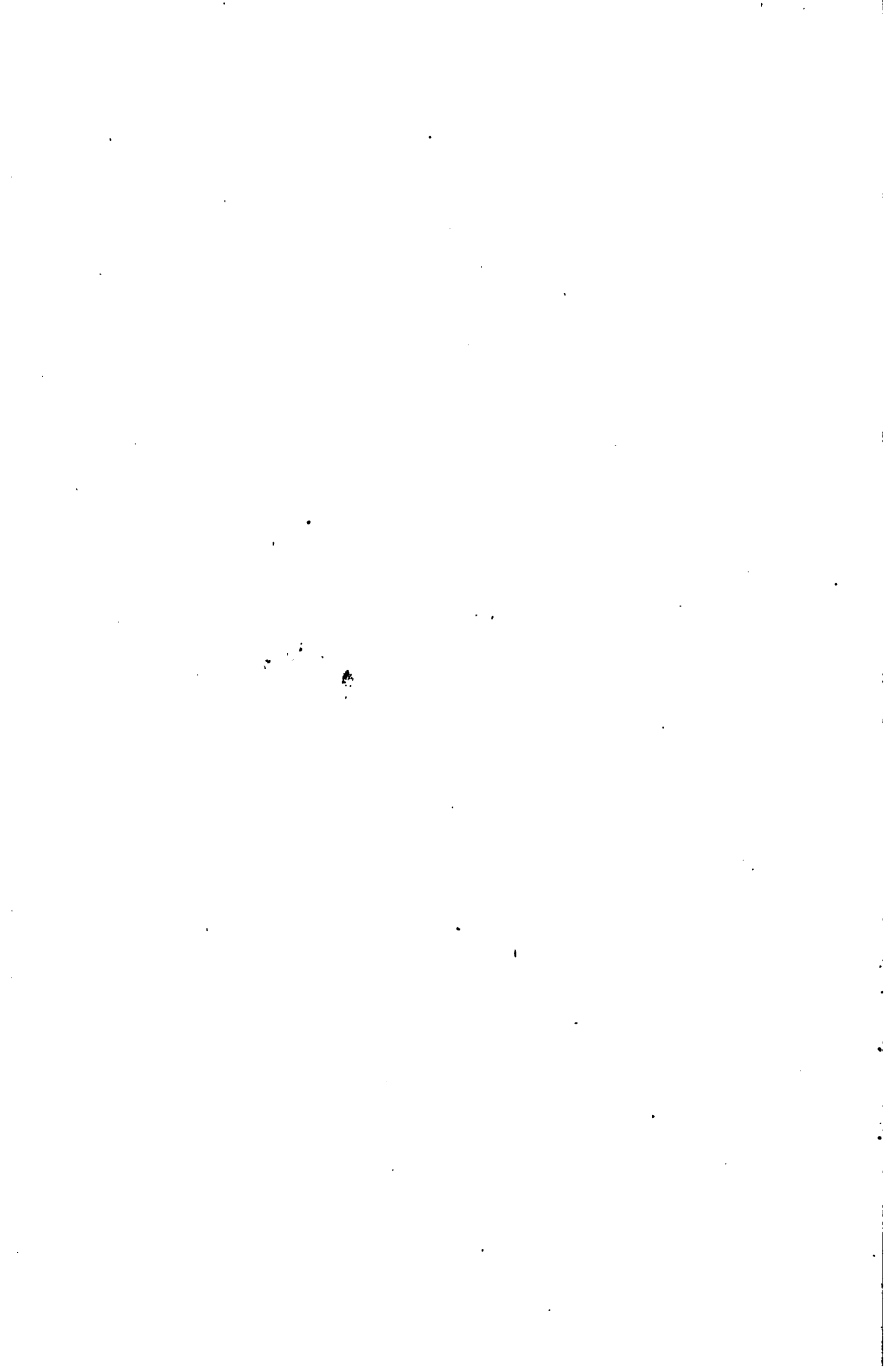
F. H. Appleton,

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CHRISTIE'S FAITH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"MATTIE: A STRAY," "CARRY'S CONFESSION,"
&c., &c.

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W. T. WATTS, ESQ.,

ST. IVES, HUNTS.



CHRISTIE'S FAITH.

BOOK I. OUT OF LUCK.

CHAPTER I.

"BEHIND TIME."

A DECEMBER night—cold, damp, and wintry. A merciless night for men and women adrift upon the streets—a night that gave no quarter to the houseless. There were houseless poor—late as was the hour—round the gates of a west-end workhouse; people who hoped for shelter in the face of despair yet, and prayed for the chance that should put a roof over them, and take their feet from the wet flagstones.

A scene striking enough—with more than enough of ghastliness and horror in its midst—but still very commonplace; attracting not a great deal of attention from late wayfarers—an every-day picture to which society had grown accustomed or hardened.

People wrote about this once or twice a year; the Poor Law Board inquired into it, and sent their general manager, who made out a report, and spoke his mind therein; occasionally a leading article appeared in the papers on this subject, and soft-hearted folk shivered in their snug home-corners at the troubles aloof from *them*, and wondered, perhaps a little, why things like it should come to pass in the richest city of the world. Philosophy, cold as the night on which our story opens, had told them long ago that every city had a reverse side akin to this; that while the world lasted there would be, as a counterpoise to its wealth, that awful

penury and squalor, against which even workhouse gates were barred. All this could be proved by figures, by theories of moral counterpoise, and by laws governing "the masses," and only crotchety people objected to unavoidable evils.

The stragglers round the gates of the Union—where union is weakness—did not moralize after this fashion, or take comfort from the great rules by which they were starving in the streets that night. They were angry, a few of them, the sturdiest and strongest, at the night porter's inflexibility; they discredited the assertion, made behind the little iron grating from which the trap dropped now and then, that the place was full; had been full for hours, and was running over with fugitives luckier than the "outsiders"—with old hands, who had come early to the feast, and fought hard for a night's board and lodging.

There were twenty or thirty left to shift for themselves—the lucky ones on the steps of the Union, huddled together for warmth—women who looked like Macbeth's witches reduced in circumstances, and their occupations gone; the unlucky ones with their backs to the wall, and the inconsiderate full length on the stones, fast asleep in the night drizzle, caring for nothing but rest. It was an odd, out-of-the-way corner for a workhouse, hemmed in by a picture-gallery and a barracks—Poverty arm in arm with the Fine Arts and Glory! Ten thousand pounds had been given for a painting only yesterday by the authorities over the way—five shillings could not be found in London to stay the empty stomachs of those night shadows.

There was a short cut to the Strand between these three national institutions; but wise heads shunned it after dark; sometimes the poor were importunate and begged hard, especially when Cerberus had locked up for good. Still people came that way occasionally—soldiers, police, tramps with a soul above the workhouse; thieves, with no souls at all that they thought worth mentioning; women in rustling silks, worse off than either, though they had not made the discovery yet awhile, and were disposed to be shocked at the troubles *en route*; men on night-work at the printing-offices, and gay young fellows "seeing life" with their eyes half shut and cigars in their mouths—youths bound West to the devil's head-quarters.

It was striking twelve when another woman, whose object was food, warmth, rest, and shelter from the cold, came round the narrow turning leading to this house of charity—came very slowly and wearily, with her bonnet awry, her shoulder to the wall for support, her head bent very low, to keep the rain from her face. By her side, more indifferent to the inclemency of the season, plodded a loose-limbed, wretchedly-clad boy, capless, shoeless, and with his hands in his pockets. It was no great effort to keep pace with the woman whom he accompanied; he was a little in advance of her at times, indulging in a solemn kind of jig to keep his feet warm, and looking back with no very amiable expression while he danced.

"Come on," he adjured at the next corner—"why don't you come on?"

"It's all very well to talk of coming on—and I—like this. You should have more patience with me, boy."

"I just wish I had."

The corner was turned, and then mother and son—such is the degree of relationship existing between these two—halted at the sight of the supplementary outcasts lingering in the lamplight round the door whence no relief was likely to issue.

"Hollo!" said one, more wakeful than the rest, as the new-comers approached, "you're late home—they've been sitting up for you, missis, ever so long, and the rump-steaks and inguns would have been cold by this time, on'y they've been kept on the hob, with a kiver over 'em!"

"Oh! don't talk like that, you fool!" cried a lank woman from the reserved seats by the door; "you're a nice one to make game? Who is it come?"

She peered from a tattered shawl drawn over her head, failed to identify the arrivals, but remained still curious.

"Is it Mrs. Simmons?" she asked.

"It's no one with whom you're acquainted, my poor creature," said the new-comer, almost patronizingly; "I've never been here before—I hope I shall never come again. It's something for one like me to come to this, I can tell you."

"Oh! you're one of the fine uns," said the woman, covering herself in her shawl again; "and too good for us, by a long chalk. P'raps," with bitter satire, "they'll let you in. Shall I ring, ma'am?"

"If you please."

"Then I don't please, on second thoughts, for somebody will slip into my place, if I get up."

"Don't make a row," adjured her companion; "we shall have the bobby round agin in a minit, and he'll move the lot of us on, if we ain't quiet."

"I think I shall get locked up," said a ruminative individual, with an empty pipe in his mouth, for company's sake; "I don't see the good of getting wet for nuffin."

"Let me come by, please—some of you," entreated the last comer; "I am very—ill—I've been walking all day, and I shall drop—soon! I've done twenty miles to-day!"

She pushed her way through the little crowd about the doors, and reached her hand toward the bell. No one made room for her willingly; no one was particularly interested in her troubles; there were women as badly off as herself, more unsympathetic; and this extra unit of discomfort was nobody's business, and roused nobody's interest.

The woman rang the bell; her companion re-commenced his flat-footed jig outside the crowd, and evinced but little interest in his mother's course of action.

After the bell had been rung twice, and its dismal clanking had reverberated through the "House," the trap was lowered behind the iron grating, and the face of the night porter appeared once more.

"It's no good keeping on ringing like this—we're quite full—we've been full since eight. You'd better go on to the Refuges, some of you."

"I haven't rung before, sir—I'm very ill—I've only just come."

"We're quite full."

"I've never been here before, so help me God, sir!" entreated the woman; "I have walked twenty miles in the wet—I and my boy—if you'll let us in, we shall be very thankful."

"We're quite full."

"It isn't as if I was regularly at this, sir," she said; "I never took a penny from the parish yet, or from any body—I'm a lady born, I really am; and I'm almost too proud to come in now, but then I am awfully ill—and weak—and hungry."

"We're quite full."

And with this ominous echo to all pleading, he shut up his trap and hastened out of the draught.

The woman turned quickly, almost indignantly, toward her contemporaries.

"What would you do now?" she said, in an excited tone, at which there was a general laugh.

The poor have a keen sense of humor, and it surmounts all obstacles, and flashes forth in strange places at times.

"What's there to laugh at in me?" she said, passionately enough; "is it because I am not used to your beggar's tricks, your beggar's shifts to get into this place? Why won't they let me in?—I am poor enough, wretched enough, ill enough for charity! What are these places for, I wonder?"

"You should have been here earlier," said one; "if you keep late hours, you must take your chance with us, my lady. They can't make room if there isn't room, I s'pose."

"I passed here at seven o'clock, and there were heaps of 'em fighting to get in," added another; "if I had tried my luck then, I should have been in bed by this time, and blowed out with water-gruel."

"What refuges are near here? What does he mean by refuges?"

"Oh! don't you know? Oh! how fine we are, although we look as if we'd roughed it before this, too."

"I've roughed it all my life," said the woman; "but I have managed to live without help before—I might get money now, perhaps, if I chose to ask at the right place, it's just possible—but I only want rest for one night! What's this about a refuge?"

"Well, it's gammon," was the reply; "it's a dodge to get us away from here, and send us to places that have been jammed up hours ago."

"Ah! I thought as much," said the woman; "what will these do all night?" she added, with a gesture implying "present company."

"Some 'll stay; some will take to walking in an hour or two; I shall get locked up myself; some p'raps they will find room for, if a swell comes by and makes a row for us, and says he'll put it all in print."

"It's hard you can't hold your palaver," whined the woman on the steps again. "What with the cabs going

home from the theyaters, and what with your row, there's no shutting one's eyes a minit."

"Where's Upper Ground Street?" asked the woman who had lived without soliciting charity till that day. "How far do you call it to Henwood's Wharf?"

"Don't know Henwood's Wharf. Upper Ground Street's about a mile."

"Over Westminster Bridge, and down Belvidere Road, isn't it?"

"Yes, if you can't pay Waterloo. What do you want there?"

"Come, Zach."

Zach, who had been silent and observant all this time, who had not desisted from his quiet dance to himself, like an attendant imp, with an old man's face, responded at once to the summons, and mother and son drifted away from the workhouse.

"We ought to have kept to London, Zach, all our lives; then we should have known more about it. But it's here, there, and every where, until one gets confused with places, and no luck in them. Now see what we have dropped to!"

"Father will turn up at Christmas, if you'll go to him," said the boy, assuringly, "p'raps he and Teddy have had better luck. Teddy's allers so clever with his fingers!"

"Don't go on like that," moaned the woman. "You were taken away from bad example early. I wouldn't have you go wrong, Zach. I tried hard not!"

"Many's the chance we've lost," said this youth, with a sigh; "we've done our wust now, and it's all up with both of us till they come back. Father said our spec would turn out 'all dickey' and blest if he isn't right, as usual. What's the matter?"

The woman had stopped, and was standing against the closed shutters of a shop, with her hand to her heart.

"Wait a bit," she gasped. "I shall be better presently."

"You're done up, you know."

"I know that well enough."

"What are we going to Upper Ground Street for? What's the good of it?" asked the youth, in an aggrieved tone.

"We may as well go there as any where else. We may find a friend there, for there's a chance of it."

"One of our chances!" added the boy. "Oh! yes."

"One of *ours*!" replied the woman; "that's all!"

They went on again down Parliament Street, resonant enough with noise still—cabs still dashing along the streets, and the pavement not yet void of life. Once or twice they solicited alms without effect, the boy, a judge of character, looking askance into each face as it passed him, and essaying those travelers who looked less obdurate than the rest. Only looked so, for they kept their hands out of their pockets, and had nothing to give away, and talked of the police when the boy was too persistent with his unnatural whine.

"It never is no good on wet nights," grumbled the boy, reurning to this mother's side. "They're in such a hurry, lest their clothes should get spiled by the wet. I never knew such a lot."

Surreyward till Belvidere Road was reached, and then, turning down that narrow thoroughfare, with timber-wharves, mills, factories and dust-yards on their left, where the dark and swollen river ran. Silent enough in the first hour of a black day was this road—only business people ever gave life to the thoroughfare, and business was over here. It was a winter when "things were slack," and things slack with the wholesalers was to slacken the sinews of existence in the hard-working, and bring a lower wage with every Saturday. There was no night-work in the Belvidere Road at that time; the steam-engines were at rest, the contractors' horses were sleeping in their stables, the inhabitants of the little dark streets on the right were all abed, dreaming of better times, perhaps; from end to end of the street, a stretch of muddy road and clammy pavement, lit by shimmering street-lamps; not even the tread of official feet echoing in that quarter, as mother and son, shadows of life, plodded onward in the wind and rain.

At the end of Belvidere Road, and passing under the Waterloo Road arch into Commercial Road, another riverside street, dank and desolate as the wanderers. There were steps in the side of the arch leading to the upper road, and the boy suggested rest there, but the woman muttered something about the police, and kept steadily on her way, reeling at times as though she had been drinking. She wished she had been for that matter, but luck had been against her all day—and she had walked and begged along twenty miles

of country road without success. Now she was in London at last, and the last chance for her, she thought, lay in Upper Ground Street.

Upper Ground Street, be it asserted, for the benefit of those whose topographical knowledge is limited, is a continuation of Commercial Road, but more narrow, and considerably more dirty—a cut-throat kind of thoroughfare, terminating at the foot of Blackfriars Bridge. The woman, heedless of the condition of the roadway, walked ankle-deep in mud, looking up at the names upon the walls, and over gates and archways—the boy plodded on, not too curious concerning his mother's motives for this quest, careless also with his steps, proceeding straight ahead without much deviation, and splashing through mud banks, pools of water, any thing, sleeping even by the way, nodding his head as he progressed, and only brought completely to his senses by a break in the pavement, a dip in the road, an inaccurate line of curb-stone ending with an iron post, that cut Zach's reverie short, and knocked him out of time a little.

Roused suddenly by the latter means, Zach became conscious that he had outstripped his mother—that his mother was not even in sight, a fact which made him rub his eyes, glance over his shoulder, and then run back at a pace more rapid.

An instant afterward he was sitting on a door-step by his mother's side, the mother with her head bent forward, and her bonnet at her feet. A world-worn, fierce face it was in the light of the gas-lamp flickering above her—the face of a proud woman, even then it seemed, in its dirt and haggardness, and with long brown hair streaming about it wildly.

"I've done my—best," she gasped; "I can't go any farther—Zach. It's be—yond me!"

"Take it quietly—you'll be better in a minute."

"Don't you think that I'm going to die, Zach—just now? That wouldn't do."

"No—that wouldn't do, I s'pose."

"You couldn't be worse off, that's one com—fort—*could* you, now?"

"Well—not much was off," said the boy, after a moment's reflection.

"You'd find your father," she said with a strange exhibition of jealousy at that time and in that place, "and he

and you and Ted could get on together better without me—you and he and Ted wouldn't miss me at all, and one the less is every—thing!"

"What's the good of going on like this?" said the boy, more wisely. "Which is the place you want to find? what's the cove's name? what's the name of the wharf you asked about at the workus?"

"When your father and I quarreled last, I swore I'd try and live without him for a year—and I've kept my word at least. We've managed to live somehow, Zach—and we've lived honestly, too. *They* can't say as much."

"I 'spect not."

"He wasn't a good husband to me ever, and he turned you both against me, and made fun of me."

"Let's go on now."

"I can't move a step farther, Zach," she said. "Try and find Henwood's Wharf on that side of the—way. There's a lamp over the gate—and you can read a little bit—why, I taught you myself! You know what a capital H's like, and an E and a D?"

"I believe you. Keep quiet till I turn up agin. And the place dropped on—what shall I do!"

"Ring the bell, and if any body comes—ask if his name is Wynn."

"And then?"

"And then come back to me."

The boy waited for no farther instructions, but hurried along Upper Ground Street, pausing before the entrance to each wharf, and trying to make out the letters above or on the gates. A sharp lad, whose schooling had been neglected, but whose wits were about him, for a light shining in an up-stairs window of a house adjacent suggested a chance of obtaining information without farther trouble on his own account. He walked into the road again, disinterred a few small stones from the mud, and flung them with accuracy at the glass, producing a sudden rattle thereon, that must have startled considerably the inmate or inmates of the room, for a shadow darted across the window-blind, and then a face came between the blind and the glass, and took stock of things below, till a few more pebbles scared it back once more.

Finally the window was softly opened, and a woman's voice called out,

"What is it? Who's that trying to break the windows?"

"Which is Henwood's Wharf, ma'am? Here's some one down here wants it 'tickerly."

"Well, to be sure!—and you to frighten a poor woman like this!—I'd be ashamed of myself! Henwood's Wharf is the first across the road on your left. You might have seen that for yourself. Is any thing the matter?"

"No."

"That's well, at any rate."

The window was banged down, the boy ran across the road to some gates set in a deep archway, and jumped up at the bell, which was clanging wildly the instant afterward, rousing many echoes within and without that street, and setting more dogs than one baying at the noise.

Before the bell had ceased ringing the shambling feet of one advanced in years were heard approaching—slow, scuffling feet, accompanied by the regular tapping of a stick.

"Who's there?" demanded a wiry voice at last—"what is it?"

"Is this Henwood's Wharf?"

"Sure it is."

"Is your name Wynn, guv'nor?"

"My name is Wynn—what of it?"

"That's all right, then—thankee."

And away through mud and water scampered the gamin at his utmost speed. Meanwhile, the man of the name of Wynn waited on the inner side of the gate for farther information; he was somewhat hard of hearing, and the departure of Zach, barefooted as he was, had not been noticed. The watchman, believing that the messenger was still without, croaked forth half a dozen questions through the key-hole—what was wanted of him?—who had sent the stranger?—was any thing wrong at home?—was Polly ill?—had any thing happened in Griffin Street?—was the place on fire?—and the silence following these inquiries perplexed the watchman very much.

"This is a rum time of night for boys to be out a-larking," soliloquized Mr. Wynn; and then his feet scuffled back out of the archway into an open space of ground, heaped with barrels, and huge piles of material covered with tarpaulins, on which the rain-drops were rattling like small shot.

Mr. Wynn was short as well as feeble, and stooped so considerably, that a hunchback might have had the advantage over him in the matter of uprightness—evidently a man whose old age deserved rest at nights, and a berth less trying to the system. He was half across the yard, and making for a warehouse facing him—a huge pile of brick-work, with an archway through its base, where the Thames stole into an inner dock at high tide, and brought the barges into the bosom of Henwood's Wharf—when the bell rang again, this time more loudly than ever.

"That's a trifle aggrawating," said the watchman, coming to a full stop again—"I wonder if it is a lark, or a—dodge?"

Mr. Wynn retraced his steps, accompanied this time by a small ratty quadruped, that burst from under the tarpaulin, and barked and pranced before him.

"Come on, Speck—let's see what all this means, gal."

Swinging his huge lantern in one hand, and plodding on with his stick in another, Mr. Wynn went beneath the archway to the gates again. Reaching the gates, he set his stick against them, and asked the nature of the business of the applicant without. This time a woman's voice responded to his summons, and the rattle that he had half drawn from one capacious pocket, was dropped to its depths in his amazement.

"I am a woman you knew in old days, Mr. Wynn, over sixteen years ago, when you were a gardener down in Warwickshire. Will you let me in, and—give me food?"

The old man gasped for breath beneath the gateway. A trap fell back in the gate, and reminded those without of the workhouse they had recently quitted—a voice called through—

"Not she who ran away with Fernwell long ago?—don't say it's Miss Ellen, please!"

"Yes, it is I and my boy."

The gate was wrenched open, and a shaking hand held forth a lantern close to the woman's face, that did not flinch from the test, but looked hard beyond into the shadows where Charles Wynn stood.

"You are alone?—he's not with you?"

"No."

"Oh! dear—come in. Down, Speck—come in, I say!"

CHAPTER II.

LATE VISITORS.

MOTHER and son passed through the door made in the great gates of Henwood's Wharf, and stood with the watchman in the dark entry—stood for a while, until the tired woman sought the support of the wall, and then slid slowly downward in a crouching position against it.

"You are ill, Miss Ellen—Mrs. Fernwell, I should say."

"I am very ill, Mr. Wynn—very poor—or I should not have come here to ask for shelter till the daylight. Only till then, and I shall be gone, sir."

"There's very little shelter in this place," said the old man. "The warehouses are locked, and the foreman keeps the key of them. I mind the yard all night—when it rains hard, I stop under here."

"They should have—treated you better—an old servant," murmured the woman.

"You're very kind to say so," replied the watchman. "I don't complain—I have been paid fair wages for fair work. But—oh! dear!—how is this?" And he held out his lantern at arm's-length, and looked into her face again.

"It was to be expected—every body expected—it but me."

"Ah! you—poor woman!"

"Has the gov'nor any thing to eat?" asked the boy, *sotto voce*.

"Why, it's just as it should be," said the watchman; "I've been a-wondering why I didn't have my appetite to-night as reg'lar as usual—and I like things reg'lar—I always did. It's been a-fidgeting me very much, why I had no appetite for supper, and put me out of temper—at *my* age, too, when I ought to have known better. So the bread and meat which Polly brought me is still wrapped up in the paper—and that's odd."

"Where is it?" asked Zach; "you haven't lost it—surely."

Mr. Wynn produced from his capacious pocket a small parcel, which he tendered to the woman; then he seized his stick from the corner, and hurried into the rainy yard. He came back with two or three sacks across his arm, which he flung on the pavement, and then shambled off once more returning with a second burden of the same material.

"There, that's all I can do," he said apologetically. "If you had come last week there were soft goods—rags and things—a thousand tons of them from France. But we cleared 'em off, and are full of oil at present. You'll find the corner by the gate more out of the draught. When you've rested a bit, your boy can go round to Polly's—she's my daughter, Polly is—and wake her up, and tell her—"

"Nothing," added the woman sharply; "I want no favor from any body. I never asked a favor in my life until to-night. This is my first—and last."

"You were always a little odd," mused the old man; "no one knew it better than I did. Oh! dear—dear—dear! and this the end of it!"

"And this the end of it!" reiterated the woman, so strangely that the man leaned forward and looked intently at her again.

The lantern shone on both their faces then—the woman weary of the world, and the man whom the world had aged and bent—and it was doubtful which face was the deeper lined.

"You're ill," said the old man—"you're very ill, Mrs. Fernwell."

"I have been ill all the week—it's a catching here that comes suddenly and stops the breath almost. I wish it would—altogether," she added with a husky rattle that did duty for a laugh.

"And you're not eating."

"No—I can't eat—I am tired—it's too much for me now, the sight of victuals. Here, Zach."

Zach snatched at the bread and meat proffered him, and began at once. He could eat at all times and seasons—he was a growing boy whose appetite grew with him. He slid slowly down to his mother's side, holding his thick meat sandwich in both hands, and tearing at it in a fashion more dog-like than human. He ate with haste, too, as though the watchman and his mother might repent of their abstinence,

and in his eagerness consumed sundry pieces of newspaper with which the sandwich had been wrapped, and which he could not spare time to remove. Speck, the terrier, watched the process of demolition for a while, until Zach suddenly kicked out at him, and made his teeth rattle; then Speck, offended, retired behind his master's legs.

"I wouldn't be in such a hurry," said the watchman to the boy, "in case your mother should come round a bit."

"Go on, Zach," said the woman. "It wasn't for myself I asked for food just now, Mr. Wynn, but for him who turns against me almost when I have nothing to give him. Oh, you don't know how hard I have tried to make this boy more honest than his brother—to keep him as much as I could from his father."

"Two children, then?"

"Two."

"And Fernwell?"

"He is tramping toward London now—I am to meet him in Whitechapel on Boxing-night, at a haunt well known to both of us. He wants this boy, because he's very sharp—and quick to learn."

"To learn what's bad, you mean?"

"God help him!—yes."

"It's a hard story," said the watchman; "and to think that you, a lady born, should drop to this."*

"I don't say it's hard," said the woman; "I chose my lot in life at seventeen years of age, and left them all because they would have stopped my marriage. They told me that they'd cast me off, if I took up with that man—you remember the day—and I said 'let them.' I said that I would not ever stoop to ask a favor of them, whatever happened to me. And then one day I ran away from home."

"Ah!" sighed the old man in assent, "you did."

"I say now, that they weren't kind to me—that they drove me to it, not knowing my right nature—that they were hard, and cold, and unforgiving—weren't they?" she asked, eagerly; "weren't they, Wynn?"

"They didn't understand you," said the old man, speaking with a reserve.

"Where is *she*?"

"Abroad—always abroad."

"You have not seen her since—when?"

"I have not seen her for twelve years."

"Tell her some day that I came to see you—that I, turned away from the workhouse, stole in here. She will be glad to say, 'I warned her of it years ago—it's all come true, just as I prophesied.' She was always a vain woman!"

"She is your sister," remarked the old man; "I'd try and think a little more of that, just now."

"I will not," asserted the woman; "I never called her sister—she was the daughter of a strange mother, and no sister to me—nothing like one—never was one—never, by Heaven!—never!"

"I wouldn't go on like that, Mrs. Fernwell."

"I never forgave her—I never shall," she said; "in all my misspent, awful, soul-destroying life, I kept my pride; and I let her last words stand between her and me, as they will even to the Judgment. She can't say that I ever asked her for a penny; that my husband and I, or my children—beggars and tramps, the whole of us—disgraced her with our importunity."

"She did not understand you," said the man again; "but I have thought once or twice that you never exactly understood her."

"Oh! yes, I did."

"And she—"

"You take her part—that's like you—like all the rest. I wish that I'd never come!"

"How did you know that I was watchman here?"

"Some years ago I found out that. We tramps find out a great deal. We—is the boy asleep?"

The sudden change of tone, the dropping of the voice to a husky whisper, was remarkable. The watchman held the lantern to the boy's face—yes, Zach was in dream-land, and snorting heavily.

"He's not unlike his father."

"Oh! don't say that," pleaded the woman—"you're sure that he's asleep?"

"I have not much doubt of that."

"Then come here on this side of me," she whispered; "I've something to tell you which he needn't know just yet. I've come here—to die!"

The old man would have receded from her in his horror,

but a lank hand had slipped from the shawl, and clutched his wrist.

"I have been dying all the week—I wanted to die in the workhouse, and then they would have kept the boy, and he might have been made something honest of in time. But it wasn't to be, and he must get his own living—he's able, after a way of his own. I *was* just a little trouble to him—perhaps."

"If you're really ill, I'll send for a doctor. Oh! dear me—if you were to die in this place of all others—*you!*"

"It might sting *her* pride in turn—it would serve her right."

"But you'll not think of doing that," urged the watchman; "it's not worth the trouble and the excitement, it really isn't! I wish that you would let me give you my Polly's address, and go away now."

"I will not die under obligations—I'll not have any favors," reiterated this demented being.

"I'll ask it as a favor to me—and Polly will be glad to see you. Why, you and she were girls together down in Warwickshire—about the same age, I take it. You'll catch cold under here—you will indeed."

"I should be glad to lie down a little while," said the woman, softening, "and the wind comes in terribly sharp through that archway yonder. That's where the river is?"

"Yes."

"I have often thought of the river! But I was always a coward, and my mind wouldn't come to it quite. And then there is the boy—poor Zach, if he only had a chance of doing well, he would turn out a bright lad—he is so clever."

"Is he, now? Well, he don't look like it!"

"Sharp as a needle, Mr. Wynn," she said, "and intelligent. Ah! you'd be surprised at him. If you could find him a place—an errand-boy's, or any thing—he'd do you credit. He's not a thief. I've kept him from all that's wrong, as well as I could. It's been a hard struggle—but oh! how I have tried! Where does your daughter live?" she asked, suddenly.

"Over the way—four doors off—she'll be sitting up at needlework to-night, so you won't disturb her. Tell her that I sent you, and what your name is. I shall be round

at six o'clock. Tell her, too, that the brandy's in the cruet with the cork in it, on the third shelf in the cupboard, to the left of the fireplace, in a sugar-basin—the old china one, which Martin says is valuable, so I've left it in my will to him. Here, Zachary, your mother's going to have a de-center lodging than this for a night—wake up, boy."

"I'm awake, guv'nor," said Zach, "I've heard you. I sha'n't forget where you've stowed the brandy—mother likes brandy when she can get it—and if your crib is on the top floor over the way, where the light is, why, I heaved up at the winders long ago, to ax about the Wharf."

Zach was on his feet again, ready for fresh adventure, stamping warmth into his feet after his usual practice—a tread-mill kind of movement, that surprised Mr. Wynn, and brought Speck jumping and barking round the performer.

"I'll go," said Mrs. Fernwell, rising with difficulty, "because I can't bear this cold any longer—and you were always a friend—you never gave me a harsh word, did you?"

"Why should I? How could I?"

"Ah! I was your young mistress then—and you a faithful and old servant. How things have altered for the worse. To think that I," she added, with her strange pride uppermost once more, "should come to *you*!"

"It is singular."

Her pride in that hour was more singular than her appearance there, and the old man might have meant that, for he was of a reflective nature, and the woman's words had troubled him, and shaken his nerves. He knew—he had heard in some way—that the young mistress had fallen very low in the scale after she had run away from home, and a stern father had disinherited her; he did not think ever to meet her again with any attribute of the old nature clinging to her. But he had expected to see her one day or another—and here she was, looking very like the figure that his fancy had sketched out.

The woman, swaying to and fro, walked toward the gate. She was restless, and could not settle down to her great misery. She would go to Mr. Wynn's house, and see his daughter—interest her, if it were possible, in this boy whom she dragged from place to place. At the gate, and before the watchman had reached it, she fell forward, with hands extended, and slid once more to the ground.

The boy gave a cry, and ran to her.

"Mother!—mother!—you'll keep strong a little longer!—till luck turns up for us! Why shouldn't you?"

The woman did not answer, and the boy looked up into the watchman's face, as he knelt there supporting his mother's head.

"What is it?—why won't she speak to me? She—she never looked like this afore—never exac'ly like this, sir. Mother, wake up—the brandy's just by, you know! It'll be all right in a minute. Guv'nor," with a wild glare toward the watchman again, "she ain't dead?"

"I—I think she is," said the watchman, bending over her more intently. "God be good to her!" he added, moving back a step, "I'm sure she is!"

CHAPTER III.

POLLY WYNN'S PROTÉGÉ.

ONLY another paragraph for the newspapers!—only another woman dead of neglect, begging at workhouse doors in vain, growing weaker and weaker in a world skeptical and pitiless!—a world that has paid its poor-rates, and been warned too well of the evils of indiscriminate alms-giving—lying down to die in the shadow of an archway in Upper Ground Street. An unpleasant affair, while the newspapers were fresh on club-room tables and in pot-house parlors, irritating honorable boards of guardians not a little, as if it were their fault!—as if they could help people dying; as if they had not their own dinners and suppers to think about!—as if these waifs and strays from other folks' parishes could not turn up at proper hours, and abide by the rules governing Unions in general. An occurrence that had happened at an unfortunate period—winter-time, when the poor *will* be troublesome!—and that revived all the old objectionable questions as to how the parish money was spent—what share fell to those in distress, and all those little matters so foggily explained on the back of the notices left with us honorable rate-payers. If there be a London parish collecting sixty thousand pounds a year in poor-rates, and women die for want of a pennyworth of gruel, what is that to do

with the question?—surely it is nobody's fault but the woman's, and the coroner on the inquest may insult guardians, overseers, and porters, if it please him—that's *his* business, and makes him popular. And if thoughtful beings entertain an idea that it is somebody's fault, for which somebody will surely answer some day, why, let them keep their crotchets from official ears—let the doors be barred still in the face of Want, and "No room" shouted through the grating till the crack of doom shivers all excuses!

There were a newspaper paragraph, a coroner's inquest, and a verdict condemnatory of parochial regulations, and then a railway accident, and a fine sensation murder swept from public recollection the case of Ellen Fernwell.

An old man and a woman were but troubled with thoughts of Ellen Fernwell after the funeral, and they were lodging in the top floor of a house in Upper Ground Street. A tall, dingy house enough, that had seen better days, and had been one of a row with a view of the river before river frontage became too valuable, and speculators built seven-storied warehouses, and monopolized in every fashion the Thames side of the way. The houses near Henwood's Wharf had come to grief in business times; the owners of ground floors took in washing, did mangling, sold clammy sweetstuff and parched peas; the first floors were chiefly rented by dress-makers, or foremen from across the road, and society lost caste as it ascended heavenward, until on top floors "such people" as this watchman and his daughter were discovered.

The watchman and daughter, Charles Wynn and Mary of that ilk, were sitting facing each other in the top floor, then, a few days after Ellen Fernwell's funeral. A cheerful little room enough for a top floor, as clean and bright as scrubbing and polishing could make it, possessing a fine show of willow-pattern plates on two shelves near the window, a square of carpet under the deal table, six cane-bottomed chairs, with movable cushions, aggravating in their movableness certainly, and inclined to wriggle away mysteriously from under the sitter; a capacious pulpit kind of arm-chair, in which a small man, like Charles Wynn, was easily engulfed; a hearth-rug, on the patchwork principle, and an old-fashioned china tea-pot on the mantle-piece.

Evidently a tidy, even a comfortable home—a home that

boasted even the luxury of flowers, represented by four haggard geraniums, that Miss Wynn was trying hard to nurse through the winter, and that objected to the process, and seemed, with their long leafless branches, to be praying for somebody to kill them. But they were "still green in the wood," Miss Wynn affirmed; and when the summer came into Ground Street again, it was Miss Wynn's opinion that they would reward her care of them by bursting into leaf; and if the wind blew the smoke of the chemical works "t'other side of the river," why a flower or two might be screwed out of them. She had seen fancy geraniums in full bloom in Upper Ground Street before this time—ay, and in that room too.

Father and daughter were not unlike the geraniums by the window there—both were spare of form and lean of aspect, and yet "green in the wood" still. They were living under difficulties, perhaps; they had fought hard and well for an honest living for many years together, and though the effort tired them, it had not done them much harm—on the contrary, as may be apparent hereafter, a great deal of good. They were poor, but they were very hard-working, and very, very independent. One lodger of remote times, a tin-plate worker by profession, and a connoisseur in rum by inclination, had been known to call the Wynns "stuck up;" but then he had proposed to Miss Wynn, and had been rejected on account of his tastes and *her* father's necessities, and he was not justified in his criticism, unless he intended to allude playfully to the third floor.

As these Wynns will trouble the reader for a while, we will sketch them in outline ere we listen to the subject of their discourse.

Mr. Charles Wynn was a man of sixty-five or sixty-six years of age—a little thin man with a big nose and puckered cheeks, a pale-faced Punch with protuberant and thoughtful gray eyes. A sharp-looking old man even yet, with energy about his thin mouth, and an expression far from vacillating in his general aspect—an old man who evidently could stand by his rights when he thought them infringed upon. Probably a gentleman with not a bad opinion of himself, and one whose self-respect had done him a good turn more than once. Down in Warwickshire, when he was by many years a younger man, his fellow-servants had called him

"Consequential Charles," though he had scarcely deserved that cognomen even in his best days. He was a gardener then—head gardener to Henwood's—but by some means or other he had degenerated into a watchman, and wore a long great-coat with a cape to it, after the fashion of the force in early days. People said that there were ten years more of life at least in old Charley Wynn; he was so active on his legs in summer-time, and there was such vigor in his bristly gray hair, cut very short, and in scrubbing-brush fashion all over his head. He was proud of his hair yet, and his daughter Polly cut it regularly on the fourth Saturday in every month, and shampooed him once a quarter.

And Miss Wynn—Polly Wynn as it will be our duty to call her from this day to the end of the story? Well, Polly Wynn was of fragile exterior, not so tall as her father—who was five feet two—with a pale face not unlike his, subdued by a smaller nose, and eyes less obtrusive, and of a deeper gray.

They were motherly eyes, and, in better times and under different circumstances, would have looked on little children of her own, and watched them very tenderly through life, but Polly had been crossed in love very early, and got over it very early too—before she came to London, in fact. Polly had not fretted, or grown sentimental, or even revenged herself, on herself, by marrying the man who was fond of rum, but she had become more quiet after her disappointment. She had always been quiet in her way from fourteen years of age. When she was fourteen her mother died—her mother, whom her father had married late in life—and she had had her father to take care of and keep house for—not to mention her brother Martin, of whom more anon. She had been a methodical little body all her life, but she had also been a cheerful body, and a cheerful heart is a mine of gold to its possessor, scattering its gold among others. A poor woman with odd ways and a cheerful heart, then—such was the watchman's daughter. An odd way of looking on the best side of every thing, and a childlike trust and confidence in her father, still more odd to witness in a woman of two-and-thirty years, and attributable to the even tenor of her life, and long companionship together. She was more womanly in many things fifteen or sixteen years ago than she was at the time we take up her story; she had fallen in love, furtively as it were, and had fretted a little

when it came to nothing; but she had kept her love troubles to herself and from her father, who had had troubles of his own; and when the wound was healed, it had all seemed "so silly an affair," that she had grown ashamed to let the daylight upon it ever again. Polly was not aware that her troubles had done her good, and that she would have been of harder and coarser grain, less like a daughter, had her heart not expanded a little in the days of her youth. And though it *was* a silly affair—possibly the reader may catch a glimpse of it as we jog onward—it had been all the better for Miss Wynn.

So a week or thereabout after Ellen Fernwell's funeral, in the early evening after tea, and before Mr. Wynn's duties for the night had commenced, father and daughter sat facing each other in the firelight—the daughter working busily at her needlework, the father with his full-veined hands upon his knees, watching the fire and his daughter's face alternately, and Speck, the terrier, watching all three from his post in the centre of the patchwork rug.

"I'm a thinking that it's hard to be worried like this at my time of life," Mr. Wynn was saying in a voice the reverse of irritable, at least—"worried by a boy who's no kind of relation to me—worried into liking him somehow too."

"No relation, father. Certainly no relation in any way to us—but then so drifted to us, and so much adrift himself like!"

"I've thought of it seriously—I've turned it all over, in every way, in *my* mind," he said with emphasis, as though his mind might be considered an infallible place to turn things over in, "and I don't see my way very clearly what to do."

"Shall we write to Martin to-morrow—shall I write to him to-night?" asked his daughter.

"I don't think that Martin need interfere," said Mr. Wynn gravely. "I have always judged for myself through life, and found myself strong enough to keep straight. What's Martin to do with this, Polly?"

"He's not dull in his ideas, you know."

"I'd rather take your idea than his, a hundred times, if I was disposed to take any body's—which I ain't, never," he added with the same calmness of demeanor. "I think I've made up my mind to get—rid—of—that boy."

Polly continued stitching briskly, and the old man, after waiting patiently for her response, rubbed his short gray hair backward with his hand, and said,

"Why don't you say something, Polly? What's the good of going on like this?"

"What shall I say?" said Polly, quickly; "if you've made up your mind, father, it isn't for me to interfere. You know so much better what's for the best—you know the world so well—and I," stretching out two hands impulsively, "am so afraid of it—have never ventured into it. I rely on you."

"Good girl. You might do worse," was the complacent answer.

"But still I think we might look after this boy for a time—just for a week or two—his mother wished it, you say, and she was very fearful of him."

"Oh! I'm sure she was. I saw it in her face, poor woman! I never *was* deceived in people's faces."

Polly did not call to his mind just then the past time, wherein he had been deceived by a smiling secretary, and promoter of a new company, to invest his savings—his very small savings—in a grand venture, which ended in utter collapse, and chained him to the Henwood service, such as it was, forever.

"I think, father," she continued, "that as you've spoken to Mr. Tinchester and got Zach on the barges, where he'll be out of mischief all the day, that it won't hurt us much to find a lodging for him here, and start him with a breakfast in the morning."

"For three shillings a week?—then there's his supper too."

"And then there's the chance of our keeping him straight till *she* comes back from abroad, and does something better for him. She ought to do it—the sister of the woman who died last week—and we should keep the boy from the streets—save him from things I don't like to think too much about," she added with a shudder.

"It might be best—I've been thinking so all along," he said without paying much respect to his daughter's share in the suggestions. "He's a sharp boy, and if I only made him out a little more, I shouldn't mind a bit, Polly—even if she never did any thing for him. Why, he's her own

born nephew, Zach is, and furrin' parts may have done her good, or coming back may warm her heart toward the lad. And the funniest part of it all is, that I like the boy; he is so mighty sharp in some things. I must have been very like him when I was about his age, I fancy."

"Then we'll keep him."

"Yes, we'll try him for a month. But if he don't turn out grateful in that time, out he goes—or we'll try him another week or so, eh, Polly? I'd like to see him ever so much more grateful for what I've done for him. Why, look at them there boots I bought for him in the Cut last Saturday to go to the funeral in, in style. They're thick enough for any company."

"And cheap they were."

"I'm not in the habit of paying through the nose for any thing—thank God, we've got our wits about us yet," he said chuckling. "Thank God, we've got money to buy boots for other people—eh, Polly?"

"Amen—amen!—why, you're coming round to your old self to-night, and you've been so dull all day."

"I'm always dull when I'm worried, Polly," he explained; "but things are off my mind, and I'm as happy as a king. But he ought to be more grateful, you know. And if he had cried a little more about his mother, I should have liked to see it, but he didn't."

"He sniffed," said Polly.

"Yes; he sniffed a little, now and then; but he didn't take his loss what I call properly, and I really do believe, my girl, that them boots have made him proud already. If I thought so, I'd knock him down, and take 'em off again."

"The boots give him a position," said Polly reflectively and decisively.

"Well, perhaps that's it," asserted Mr. Wynn.

They gave him a rectangular position, and an elephantine kind of march at present; but then they were two sizes too large—although Polly had stuffed the toes with wool—and the heels themselves were quite a legacy in iron. Zach had run barefooted for years, and though he *was* proud of his boots—Mr. Wynn was quite right in that particular—yet they preyed upon his mind, as well as his feet, and were difficult to manage just at present.

They were talking of the boots still, when their arrival

was heralded by a formidable clatter up the stairs, and then Zach Fernwell, with a cap on his head, and a very dirty face beneath the cap, came unceremoniously into the room, and dropped before the fire with hands outspread.

"It's precious cold upon the river, I can tell you," he said; "it blows all ways at once at Blackwall. Gosh! how it did cut round the barge, and how old Perkins's teeth rattled. I don't think I shall like the water much."

"I'd take my cap off when I was so disposed," said Mr. Wynn, caustically. "It's considered perlitte in company."

"Oh! is it?" replied Zach, removing his cap at the hint. "I haven't had nothink to do with company yet—and manners I've got to learn."

"A trifle of 'em."

Zach tucked his cap beneath him, and proceeded to warm both hands, glancing askance at man and woman near him. A quick, sharp glance it was, that took in both on the instant; Speck, the terrier, looked like that when doubtful if praise or blame were about to fall to his share.

"We've been talking of you this last half hour," said the watchman, "and a wondering what was to become of you."

"And a wondering what was to become of me! Well, that's odd!"

A short, sharp laugh, to match his glance of a moment since—an unpleasant, hard laugh, that was older than his years. What was to become of him! Well, he had wondered himself more than once about that—it had troubled his mind without grieving him in any great degree. He should come uppermost somehow—he should meet his father and Teddy in good time, and could take care of himself till he found them at the "Jolly Fiddlers," in Whitechapel. He was a little concerned to think that they had not turned up there, or inquired about him and his mother—he knew that they had not, as will presently appear.

"And we think that it will be better for you to stay here, Zachary, until you get a good character, and a place more to your liking," said Polly, at this juncture.

"I've been a thinking that it mayn't be better. I fancy that I should like to keep on my own hook, mum."

"Good gracious—what hook?"

"On my own hook, with nobody to interfere," said the boy, very thoughtfully, staring at the fire. "What's the

good o' me trying to please every body—it's not in my line. I'm old enuf to keep shop for myself—it isn't as if I was a kinchin."

"Don't you like the home, Zach?" said Polly, quite timidly.

"Ye-es," replied Zach, in a hesitant manner.

"Then why not try and make it home—and let father and me take care of you till you are a little older. Your mother wished it."

"Well, you see, this is a swell sort of place," said Zach, quite argumentatively, "and I haven't been used to chimney ornaments and carpets, and a fire to come to. I was with mother, and mother got on badly allers, coming the fine when it didn't pay, and we'd nothing to eat. I don't feel," he added, with an uneasy writhe, "quite comfurable here."

"What do you want to do?" asked Mr. Wynn, somewhat nervously.

"I shouldn't mind trying my luck about here—keeping to the barge-work till the winter's over, at any rate; but I don't want to larn a lot o' things, or be sent to night-school, or any of them dodges. I'd rather be my own master, guv'nor, thankee."

"Oh! would you?" said governor dreamily regarding him. "Well, I'm sorry to hear it."

"Sorry!" said the boy, again looking askance at Mr. Wynn. "Not both on you sorry?"

"Yes."

"Both on you sorry to get rid of me?" ejaculated Zach, with his spasmodic laugh. "Well, that *is* a good un—that gets over a cove. That's the wonderfulest thing that's happened yet!"

He pushed his tangled black hair back from his forehead, and then scratched at it with both hands, laughing again in that odd, dry fashion, which perplexed his hearers at its utter lack of merriment. It was his mother's laugh, thought Mr. Wynn, and Zach had come to it by inheritance.

"So you can think it over," said Mr. Wynn, rising, and taking his stick from the corner; "if it's worth your while to let us have your salary, allowing all we can for pocket-money, you may stop while you behave yourself. But you'll have to show a little more gratitude before we think it's worth *our* while. Polly, I'm off."

Mr. Wynn walked across the room with dignity, and took from the back of the door his great-coat, into which he would have struggled without assistance, had not his daughter risen also and crossed to his help. He was disturbed by this youth's demeanor, this youth's stolidity, and he went down stairs without offering any farther advice. Polly Wynn came back to the fire, and proceeded to stir it with that gentleness characteristic with people to whom coals are valuable and scarce. The little woman on the chair, and the boy on the hearth-rug, were silent for some time; both were thoughtful, both perplexed.

It was a thoughtful face of the motherless lad heaped at the feet of the little woman—a face that wore more of cunning than intelligence, thanks to the adverse fates which had met the boy from his birth. The face of a lad who had lived hard, and had learned to distrust early in life—who was distrusting then the motives of the good people upon whom he had chanced. He would rather be his own master, he thought—he was old enough to “rough it.” He had only himself to take care of—it was not like having a mother on his hands, and now there was the chance to do as he liked slipping away from him. For these people wanted him to stay, and every body else had wanted him to go—from the shop doors, whence big errand-boys had shoved him; from the deep doorways, whence the clutch of the police had dragged him; from the corners of streets and market-places; every where he had been very much in the way, until this “swell place” in Upper Ground Street had first seemed too comfortable for any thing save Heaven, and then too embarrassing for any thing like home. He hoped this funny little woman would not ask him to stay again—he was even doubtful if it would *pay* to stay; and he was sure he should be much more happy when he was his own master! Besides, he was not certain what they wanted him to stay for; it might be “a plant” of some kind—he had heard of people “collaring” coves like him, and taking them off in cabs to reformatories, where they were “whacked” into being good boys, and into saying all kinds of things on their knees. That wouldn't suit him, and he'd better make sure of matters and depart.

Polly Wynn began to talk to him again, and he winced at her voice—soft and kind, and unlike any voice that he

had ever heard, for it was a voice that always startled him and got the better of him.

"Your mother wanted you to stay, Zach," she repeated, suddenly.

"She said so. She said lots of things she never meant, mum."

"She meant this."

"I'm not so sure on it. You didn't know her so well as I did."

"I knew her before you were born, child."

"Did you, though?"

"When she was a lady, and I only a servant in her father's house, Zach. That's why I should like to see after you till you're big enough to take care of yourself."

"Big enuf!" said Zach.

"I want you to try for a month—less time, if you like—if you can't take to this as a home, where you'll be welcome so long as you're good and honest. If you take to it after that, and grow up with us, we shall be proud to see you getting on; and some day, in your turn, you might help us, and understand better why we want to help you."

"I can't make that out," said Zach; "it isn't as if I was a nice boy, or you was Teddy. Nobody ever really cared for me but Teddy—that's my big brother, mum—and I just should like to see him again, and go shares with him in every think. He'd make you die of larfing with his games, when he's in one of his funny ways—why, I've actiwallly seen him make father laugh."

"What is he?"

Zach looked up at his interlocutor. He didn't exactly know what Teddy was, he said, after a while; he was sharp enough to get his own living, though, and he *helped* father wonderfully. Teddy could do every thing—dance jigs, sing comic songs, throw double summersaults at fairs, fight—oh! how Teddy could fight! Father couldn't do without Teddy, he knew, for when Teddy got into trouble—about once every six months he managed to be nabbed by the perlice, he did—things weren't on the square till Teddy came back again. He, Zach, had been in search of Teddy himself, at the "Jolly Fiddlers," Whitechapel way, but nobody had heard any thing about him, or his father. The boy ran on about his brother, for the first time showing animation on

one theme. The brother was evidently the model at which he aimed; and Polly Wynn listened and shuddered, and saw the danger in this hero-worship looming up from the distance.

"Your mother did right to take you away from this Teddy," said Miss Wynn, quite warmly; "he meant you harm—he would have brought you up to steal, and you would have gone to prison like him, growing worse and worse."

"I'm not afraid of prison," said the boy, doggedly; "it never frightened Teddy—it's better than the workus any day. It's warmer, and you don't work so hard."

"Ah! so much the worse."

"And you won't like me here—nobody ever took to me."

"Let me try. Let me—an ignorant woman enough, Zach—be your guv'nness for a little while, teaching you all I know, which ain't much, but which may make you very different. Oh! Zach, I will try so for your own sake, as well as your mother's. You don't know why I try so hard yet—you will some day, my boy, and bless me for it."

"Why don't you tell a chap now?"

"You wouldn't understand—I could not explain," said she, more warmly still; "when you're a bigger lad—quite a man—it'll all come easy to you. You don't—oh! good Lord! you don't *want* to steal?"

"No."

"You'd like to lead an honest life, and grow up respectable?"

"Ha! ha! 'spectable? that's a joke, any how."

"And I would try to take your mother's place, and be a mother to you, Zach, for I am fearful what will become of you, trusting in yourself like, and looking after those who can't do you any good—from whom your mother kept you away, for your own sake. Why, I've heard of boys beginning like you in places like Henwood's, and working up'ard till they got rich men, and rode in coaches, and all by trying their hardest to do their best in every thing."

"Do you think any think of that's true?"

"True as Gospel, Zach."

"What's that?"

"In good time I'll tell you, if you'll let me. There, promise me, boy, to live with us a bit?"

He was strangely hard to persuade to his own good—

strangely ungrateful for the unselfish efforts of the friends who had risen around him. He believed in this woman, despite his own suspicious nature, however, and he gave in at last, as though he were conceding a favor in lieu of receiving one.

"Look here, mum, I'll take it for a month at three bob a week. I haven't been used to a place to live in, and it mayn't suit. It don't fit jist now—it's like these blessed boots the guv'nor bought me for a Christmas-box, and I may get used to one as well as t'other, if I try hard; but it isn't like trotting through the country, and seeing fresh things, with lots of races to go to, and lots of pickings to be found there—off the grass, not out of pockets, mum!" he added, as Miss Wynn started somewhat.

"And you'll do your best to like us?"

"I shall like *you*," he added, frankly, "and the guv'nor ain't a bad sort."

"You must call him Mr. Wynn."

"I'll call him what you think he likes best until he kicks me out of doors."

"He'll not do that, Zach."

"Oh! yes, he will," said Zach, in reply; "I'm not the sort of chap that any body will take to long. I never liked any body much," he added, fiercely—"why should any body try to like me?"

He curled himself close to the fender, and let his head drop upon his breast, as he half knelt, half crouched there. He went to sleep suddenly in that position, and it was not the happiest or most contented face in the world into which Polly peered a few minutes afterward.

"I hope it's for the best," she murmured, after a long stare at her protégé—"I think it's for the best."

CHAPTER IV.

A FRIENDLY CALL.

ZACH FERNWELL settled down in his new home, then. He gave up three fourths of his weekly salary for the board and lodging afforded him by Charles Wynn and daughter, and he dismissed, or seemed to dismiss—it was doubtful

which—all thoughts of Teddy from his mind. Teddy had been the one theme on which this boy could discourse—finding his brother an objectionable topic to introduce, Zach Fernwell was silent enough on other subjects. He was certainly a boy difficult to understand. Mr. Wynn had professed as much, and wiser men than Mr. Wynn would have been puzzled to define Zach's character, or to prophecy concerning its future development.

Zach might be termed a difficult study—a something hard to impress, still harder to move. Boys in his situation—boys from the streets—even boys whose lives had been akin to his own, might have softened wondrously under the great change, and shown more readily their gratitude for past and present interest. Zach was not demonstrative; he was watchful and reserved—he might be even suspicious still. For years he had been a vagrant and tramp; the last year he had been his mother's companion, and the mother's restlessness at her position, her nervous fears for him, added to a wild meaningless pride that puzzled and fretted him, had not done him any good. He could not comprehend the mother's complaints, made even to him, against the father; he did not bear the father any great amount of good will; he had been kicked and knocked about as well as his mother in earlier periods, but he was old enough to see the futility of fretting for past indignities. His father was a "pretty good sort" when things went well with him, and why his mother could not take the rough with the smooth he had never been able to make out. He liked his mother better than his father—that's why he kept to her, he assured himself, when he could have given her the slip at the fairs, and gone back to Whitechapel—and he had felt her loss more deeply than the watchman Wynn believed.

Zach was certainly a boy who reflected upon his chances in life; he began soon to think that perhaps it *would* pay to remain the winter with the Wynns. He did not know if he were grateful for their interest in him; he had a faint idea that three shillings a week squared all obligations, and that the Wynns were glad of the three shillings; he could not understand their wish to see him leading a brighter and a better life—their wish to make a man of him. Why, his own mother, who had played at being honest, never taught him the best way to remain so, or sought to get him a berth

any where; she had kept him on the tramp with her, and it was the old life with the father and Teddy over again, only not quite so jolly! His mother had never been jolly—not even with brandy, to which she had been partial at times, and dashed at like a mad woman when luck was with her—occasionally when luck was very much against her.

But the mother was gone, and he had to shift for himself. He had been presented with clothes less tattered than those which he had worn on the night his mother died; he had been introduced into a sound and serviceable—if ponderous—pair of boots; he had been found a place on a barge, to make himself generally useful and see nobody stole any thing—which was a good joke, he thought, for *him*!—for the first time in his remembrance, he had caught a glimpse of what home was like. The whole affair was novel and worth trying, and Zach went at it in a business sort of way, showing some prudence, but no feeling—which, alas! was not to be wondered at in one whose feelings had been deadened so long.

In his business life, Zach proved himself a sharp boy. He was naturally sharp—for he had lived by his wits, young as he was—and the foreman of the wharf took him off the barge-work, and gave him the run of the yard during the day, constituted him errand-boy, watch-dog, any thing that might be useful in that great landing-place and store-house, where barges came with every tide into the inner dock, to load and unload, and heavily-leaden wagons rumbled in and out all day under the great archway, where Zach's mother had given up the ghost.

Zach fell into business habits. He had profited by example all his life, and the better example now before him told upon him by degrees. He saw a method and rule governing all things at Henwood's Wharf, and he was quick at imitation. He was quick to find out whom it was best to please, too—therefore a judge of character in a small way. He knew who gave him the most orders to fulfill, who paid him his wages on a Saturday night, who held in his hands the power of summary dismissal, and he took stock of these facts almost by instinct. There was one spiteful carman who had an unpleasant habit of knocking him down for trifling offenses, when he was in the way—and when he was not in the way, it mattered little which—and Zach took

stock of him also, and thought that he should like to make a run at him behind, and pitch him into the dock—which was not an amiable thought of Zach's, though it may prove that he treasured offenses against him more carefully than he noted down small kindnesses.

But then he had been only a few weeks with the Wynns, and Rome was not built in a day. In those few weeks he had altered; watchful eyes had noted an improvement in him; one woman, simple and tender-hearted, thanked God for it already. Zach was like a boy waking up from a bad dream; he was dazed still, but the consciousness of something better in his midst was slowly asserting itself. Presently he would be thoroughly awake—alive to the new world, and with the black past far away in the shadows to which it belonged.

Six weeks after his promise to Polly Wynn, he was certainly not the Zach Fernwell of our first chapter. He had found a quiet yet comfortable home to return to after a day's work; he had always seen there a little gray-eyed woman anxious to make him welcome; to inquire concerning the day's incidents, and make a story from them; to bother him now and then about his letters, but that did not matter much—and after all there was something about the "guv'nor" he did not wholly dislike. During those six weeks he had been twelve times to church with the watchman's daughter, and church had very much amazed him indeed. Polly Wynn had not attempted too much, and had left the church to speak for itself—Polly was waiting for her brother to take that little matter in hand, having no faith in her powers of conversion, and great faith in her brother's. Polly would always be more of a friend than an adviser, she thought—she was only a child herself, with a father to look after her; and when Martin came from abroad—he had been sent abroad for a few weeks on special work, and had taken his daughter with him—he would be interested in little Zach also, she was certain, Martin being a philosopher as well as a marqueterie-worker. Till then, let her be satisfied with a certain amount of progress in her protégé.

Presently would come home, too—there were rumors of her being already on her way—the woman for whom Polly was anxiously waiting; for whose sake, as well as Zach's, she had incurred the expense and responsibility of Zach's

maintenance. She and her father had talked very often of this Mrs. Henwood—the sister of the woman who had died in Upper Ground Street—the woman whom Mr. Wynn had served faithfully for many years, and who had found a watchman's place for him, when he was fit for nothing else.

Father and daughter thought there was a chance for Zach, if Zach continued to improve until Mrs. Henwood's ship came home. And now almost with every day there stole toward the light fresh traits of a new existence, and Mr. Wynn called particular attention to his prophecies concerning Zach, and how he had always said that this and that would be—which he never had said, by the way, although he believed implicitly in his present assertions.

Zach had shown an astonishing instance of forethought on the evening we take up his story again in detail. It was Saturday night; he had received his wages, paid over his three shillings, and was sitting in a heap on the hearth-rug, in his favorite position, with his hands in his pockets, and his dark eyes staring at the fire. The watchman and Speck were ready to withdraw; it was eight in the evening, the hour for night duty—long hours of duty altogether on this occasion, lasting till six on the Monday morning, when business life began again—and Polly was looking up her market-basket previous to a shopping excursion.

"Didn't you say somethin' about a thimble, when you were rich, having a new silver one all to yourself, Polly?"

Master Fernwell had fallen into the habit of calling Miss Wynn "Polly," after the watchman's fashion. He could not call her mother—Miss Wynn was too polite, and "mum" she objected to—Polly was suitable, he thought, after grave deliberation. Polly thought so also—it constituted him a brother at once—it was the home title by which she had been known all her life, and if Zach could look upon her as his sister it would be all the better for his moral development. She did not like the idea of being a mother to him; she had no idea of her own age; her heart was young at two-and-thirty. There were times even when Polly almost fancied she was a little girl still, when her father warned her of the crossings, and advised her like one who was very ignorant of the world—and that was true enough in many respects.

"When business is brisker, Zach," she replied to Zach's

question; "the last dress which I made isn't paid for yet."

"Well, there's the thimble."

And Zach drew it, enwrapped in pink paper, from his pocket, and held it toward her in an ungainly fashion, with his eyes still fixed upon the fire.

"Now, bless the boy—why, has he really!"

"I sha'n't want this week's bob, and I saved the rest," said Zach; "and they allowed me something for the old thimble."

"Thank you, Zach," said Polly; "you don't know how glad I am!"

"Yes, I do. You're fond of thimbles."

"I am glad, because you thought of me."

"And there was a hole in the t'other one—and you pricked your finger and made a fuss about it yesterday. I didn't much like going to the shop—and the coves behind the counter didn't much like the cut of me. I knows the looks of them coves, and what they think about us, and he wasn't to know that I was cock of the walk at Henwood's along with dad here."

"Guv'nor" had been replaced by "dad," and home names were coming with home thoughts. Youth in a pure atmosphere must change for the better, and Zach was changing now. Zach was in high spirits that night, too—the self-sacrifice had done him good, and he was pleased to see that his gift was appreciated.

Mr. Wynn condescended to pat him on the head before departure that night.

"You're a boy that will do me credit, Zach," he said. "I'm proud to think of the change in you. And you are not tired of us either—just as I thought."

"I'm getting used to every think," said Zach; "but it was hard work at fust, and I so fond of cutting about where I liked, and dodging the perlice. I don't know," he added more thoughtfully, "but what I should like a barrow all to myself of oranges three a penny—the mouldy side down'ards, and one mouldy one in each lot—but still a reg'lar place in the winter ain't a bad spec."

"And in the summer you'll be settled quite," said Polly, "and going to evening school, then, learning your letters fast."

"I don't think I shall care about them letters much—father is full of letters enough for the lot on us. Teddy don't know his letters yet."

"But you must. Why, we're going to make a man of you from this night—are we not, father?" cried Polly.

Mr. Wynn was going out of the door.

"I hope so," he added more cautiously as he retired.

"Oh! I'm sure of it," said Polly, sanguinely; "you'll be the man to take care of your old sister when you've got a house and home of your own—perhaps a big shop in Oakley Street, or Lower Marsh, if you keep honest, Zach, and work hard, and never be afraid of work. But how I am talking, to be sure, and all the marketing not done yet."

"I think I'll come with you to-night," suggested Zach.

"No—you mind house for me till I come back, and don't wear out your boots too soon. Shoe-leather costs a sight of money, and you must be more careful, boy. I'm not afraid of crowds—I sha'n't be long."

Polly departed, and Zach, with his eyes fixed on the fire, went off into reverie, long and deep, concerning his past, present, and future; concerning the money he had spent on the thimble, and Polly's thanks for it; whether he should be able to keep himself next week on "short commons," till Saturday night came round; and whether Polly would give him back the thimble, if he couldn't. Thinking seriously now, he could scarcely understand why he had run into Westminster Road, and bought a silver thimble—Polly could better afford to buy things than he—he didn't owe them any thing—and yet it had been "fun" to take them by surprise, and see them stare at him. He must have gone to sleep after all these thoughts, for he did not hear the door open, or become conscious of it remaining open, and a face, wild, white, and seamed, glaring at him through the aperture.

Not till a hand was laid upon his shoulder, did he start and look up, give a cry of surprise, and stagger to his feet, gasping with amazement,

"What, TEDDY!" he cried.

CHAPTER V.

"TEDDY."

THE new-comer, who had surprised the dreamer by the fire, was a strange specimen of animated nature—strange enough, at times, to be looked after in the streets, and looking strange and more out of place in that room. A youth of fifteen years of age we know, or his face might have represented any thing up to five-and-twenty years, and in its quiescent moments was old enough for any man's. A face slightly pock-marked, exceedingly dirty, lit up by two black eyes, larger than his brother's, and as full of restless fire as a wild beast's. What his nose was like it was difficult to determine, from a strip of sticking-plaster that covered that organ, and a part of his cheek; but his mouth was large and flexible, curling up at the corners somewhat, as if with an instinctive sense of the humorous, difficult at all times to repress. Altogether, had it not been for the sticking-plaster, the restless nature of the eyes, and the dirty condition of the cheeks, it might have been termed a good-tempered face—a face to take to, under different circumstances, and in society that might be trusted. But it was no more a face to take to then, than Teddy was to be taken to and trusted for himself. It was the face of one who had seen the worst of life, mixed with it, and been part of it; stamped with the impudence common to such faces, and with the bravado which resists all that is true and higher than itself, and repels by some awful law all claim to alter it. Teddy was a large likeness of his brother Zach, as we saw him first, near a West-End workhouse—not so shoeless, ragged and forlorn as Zach had been, but yet altogether presenting a picture as deplorable. Teddy possessed a hat, rather too large for him, a napless black hat, with the side stove in; one boot, and a shoe, the sole of the latter flapping with every tread; a corduroy jacket, somewhat more decent, and with less fringe about it than might have been expected; trowsers to match his jacket, split across both knees; and a thread-

bare waistcoat, from which protruded a brass tobacco-box, and the stem of a short pipe.

"Well, young shaver," said Teddy, laying a hand upon each shoulder of his brother, and shaking him somewhat roughly in his clutch, "a nice young feller you, to cut your fam'ly c'nections in this here kind of way!"

"I couldn't help it, Teddy."

"Blest if a feller"—giving Zach another shake—"mightn't as well be without a brother! Blest if you're the feller, Zach, I took you for!"

"I'll tell you all about it, Teddy, in a jiffy. Don't keep shaking up a cove so. How did you find me out?"

"It wasn't werry hard work, considerin' the inquest and the noosepapers," said Teddy, relaxing his hold, and taking up his position with his back to the fire. "We read it all in print, the guv'nor did, leastways, and when we got to town it wasn't particlerly hard to find a scamp like you."

"Why didn't you come afore?"

"Because I was put in quod for fourteen days at Rochester—and the guv'nor was kind enuf to wait till I came out. I likes attention, Zach, and I thought it uncommon handsom of him."

Zach looked up sharply into his brother's dirty face.

"You're chaffing," he said quickly.

"Chaffing ain't my forty, as the flash coves say," answered Teddy; "I ain't been in chaffing humor lately. And so *she's* dead, Zach?"

"Yes—*she's* dead, Teddy."

Teddy looked at the patchwork rug on which his muddy boots were planted, looked up at the china tea-pot, the chimney ornament there, and critically examined it.

"Did *she* say any think about me afore she died?" he asked.

"Not as I remembers."

"Not a word, Zach, I s'pose?"

"Not a word, I think. Why?"

"Why, because I thought she might; we had a jolly breeze, mother and me, afore she took you off with her, and I thought she might have said a somethink."

"A jolly breeze," said Zach; "oh! was there?"

Jolly breezes before the family separated, and mother and father took a child apiece, had not been unfrequent things

to wonder at. Zach remembered something of the last one, faintly, he thought now.

"I said I'd stick by the guv'nor," said Teddy; "I did not see the pull of going on tramp with her, and told her so, and she lost her temper. Why, if I had gone, what'd had been the good?"

"I don't know."

"Nor any body else—I knowed that. I knowed what she wanted to do, and what she couldn't—and what I couldn't help her in—keep straight, that is. I'd growed crooked, and couldn't be twisted t'other way. I didn't want to," he added, with a rusty laugh; "and the guv'nor objected, like a man of the world, Zach, my boy. And you're quite sure that she didn't say a word, just as if she—she might have liked to say, 'Good-by, Teddy,' or any think of that sort?"

The fierceness in the eyes appeared to have suddenly departed, and there was human interest—almost human sympathy—in that world-worn face.

"She went off sudden-like."

"Ah! so she did; and she'd too much to think about, to talk of a feller like me then. Proper enuf—I didn't want her to think of me—I don't want any one to think of me, forever and ever, amen, Zach, and that's all the prayers I know."

"Where—where *is* the guv'nor?" asked Zach, looking suddenly, almost nervously toward the door; "he isn't in the house?"

"No—he's at his country place till Monday—he'll be in town on Monday, Zach, at the old shop."

"In Whitechapel?—at 'The Fiddlers?'"

"Yes."

"He wants me back?"

"I don't know that he cares much about that," said Teddy; "it's more comfurable for the kit of us to be together, hanging by each other, and doing our best; but I don't know that he cares, or I cares." I thought I'd just come, and see about you, Zach—make sure that you hadn't got too proud by this time to speak to me—I thought I'd look up this crib, at all events."

He began to look up the third floor front in earnest; he was of an inquiring mind, with a cat-like interest in strange

places. The manner that he had of walking about on tip-toe, in a noiseless, stealthy way, was feline in its nature; he was not happy, he could not evidently settle down until he knew the place by heart. He continued his conversation with his brother during his perambulations and inspections, asking for full particulars of the past year's history—how Zach had got on with his mother?—where he had fallen in luck's way, and where out of it?—what he was doing now?—how it had come to pass that strangers had given him shelter, and constituted that top room a home for him?—whether he didn't think it best to come back to Whitechapel and begin again, learning the new dodges of his particular profession, and becoming a comfort to his family? All these inquiries, and more, wandering about the room meanwhile, looking under the squab of the sofa-bedstead, into the cupboard by the fireplace; taking down the tea-caddy, and removing the lid for a more accurate scrutiny; shaking up the work-box, and a small mahogany box he had also discovered, and listening intently to the sounds elicited; opening the table drawer, and turning over its contents with a hasty hand; finally proceeding to the window, and looking down into the thick and hazy shadows of the lower world.

At the window, Zach joined him, and placed both hands on his arm.

"Teddy," he said, in a husky whisper, "I think I'll go back with you."

"Eh?" said Teddy, somewhat surprised; "so that's the game. Well, I thought you would—that's why I came."

"I can't take to 'em, Teddy," he continued in a more excited manner; "I can't grow good—it isn't as if I had your pluck, or was older, or any think of that sort. It's a hard sort of game, and it don't come nat'ral to keep your fingers to yourself when there's a chance."

Teddy quite started, and looked down intently at his brother. Teddy was tall for his age, and Zach short for his, so the former could look down with impunity.

"That's true enuf," said Teddy.

"And they leave the things about so at the wharf—and in the stables, where the horse-cloths are—and in the counting-house, where they takes such lots of money sometimes, Ted."

"Ah!" said Teddy, drawing in his breath, "such lots of

money—lucky buffers them. I wish I had been 'prenticed to that perfession."

"You don't know what hard work it is to leave the things alone," said Zach, "to grow good! You can't think, Teddy, how rum it feels to live with a couple of chaps, a man and a woman, who try to make you believe that you're getting better, and talk about what's right and proper—jest as if they knowed more than t'other people."

"It *must* feel rum," said Teddy; "go on. Who are they?"

"The man's a watchman at the wharf—he got a place for me as errand-boy—and the woman's his daughter—I like *her* best. She knowed mother when mother was a lady."

"Ah! that's it—I've heard somethink of that—I know more about that than the guv'nor gives me credit for. And they've been nuts on you, then?"

"Yes."

"They think to bring you up 'spectable, and don't mind the trouble. Well, odd uns they air, and no gammon. They haven't heered much on us, I should say, poor things! What's their names?"

"Wynn."

"Heads they lose, tails *you* win," said Teddy, half dreamily; "you've dropped into a queer crib, my boy."

"They takes us to church—they're going to make us read and write—isn't that a shame, Teddy?"

"It's like their imperence, for the guv'nor objects to that game—he says he never saw the good on it, and he ought to know best, because he's tried it. But what do they say about you at the counting-house, where the money rolls in, Zach?"

"I heard old Tinchester tell somebody that I was a sharp lad, and should get on if I kept straight."

"Ho! ho! kept straight, and we *will* grow crooked, the lot on us. We likes it, for it's nat'ral—we don't want any nails in us, to keep us 'gainst the wall—we've no friends, and don't want none—hooray, Zach, my boy! Let's cut?"

Zach seemed influenced by his brother's enthusiasm; his eyes sparkled, his breath came short. Here was quiet, monotonous every-day life—beyond was the glorious streets, wherein he would be free, and his own master! He was ready at once, when his elder brother paused once more.

"Hold hard ! let's think of this agin," he said ; "let's sit down by the fire, and think it over."

"She'll be back," said Zach.

"It don't much matter ; she can't object to you taking a walk with a brother you ain't seen for a year a'most. We won't be in a hurry—there's nuffin to run for, and no policeman arter us. Let's think it over—steady. Not what I want—not what you want—not what he wants—but what's best for little Zach here. Upon my soul, I—"

He stopped after that fierce exclamation, and when Zach asked him what he meant, he did not answer, but thrust his long fingers into his oakum-like hair, dropped his elbows on his knees, sat all of a heap on the chair recently occupied by Polly Wynn, and stared hard at the fire. Zach ventured to speak after a while, and the brother snapped him up with a "Don't bother ;" and a second time, long afterward, when the candle had burned low, and its wick was bent double like Teddy, again the "Don't bother, I tell you," was muttered peevishly.

The boy with the man's face—it might have been a man with the devil's face at that time—at last looked up, dark and ominous. He had thought it all over—coolly and deliberately he had weighed every chance for his brother and for himself, and he delivered his verdict with a lowering brow. There was no sense of humor in the hard lines about the mouth at that time.

"It's no use stopping, Zach—they'll find you out, they'll find us all out, and you'll have to get away from here six months, twelve months arterwards, and *all that time lost* ! I can't get on with the guv'nor by myself—we don't agree, and the three on us might ; I could put up with a deal if you was with us—for I missed you, Zach, somehow—there, that's it ; you and I did jog on well together, didn't we ?"

"Ah ! didn't we ?"

"And it's no use you staying here to be set agin me—that's what it'll be, just as mother tried—won't it ?"

"I don't know. I'm ready to go. It's like being in a *good station-house* here, where they look arter you just as much ; but don't lock you up. I might have got used to it, if you hadn't—"

"Then you're sorry I've come ?"

"No—oh ! so glad, Teddy ! For I only wanted you to persuade me to go—you who know every think."

"Every think that's bad — ha! but why shouldn't I?" cried Teddy; "I don't believe there ever was such a bad un — 'cept the guv'nor, p'r'aps. Here, let's get out of this flash garret, you and me. We needn't — we *won't*, be beholden to good people for meat and drink when we can get it for ourselves—better than they can—quicker too, and nuffin to pay. Come on, Zach."

He pressed his arm through his brother's and assumed the burlesque vein, the pompous strut of one well to do in the world, and wishing the world to be aware of the fact. It was not pleasant acting at that time—it might have been better done, had Teddy's heart been more in the play; it was ended suddenly by the door opening, and by Polly Wynn, market-basket on arm, blocking up the aperture.

"Oh! lor'—who's this?"

Zach shrank back a step behind his brother—that brother who had always taken his part, and stood his friend before he was fool enough to go away from him! Why, Teddy had fought his father once to save him from blows—he should never forget that night!—and he would never desert Teddy again, if he would always take his part and stick up for him. Teddy would stick up for him now—for he could not face that little woman who had been kind to him, and whose pitying interest had been so hard to bear!

"What do you want here?" asked Miss Wynn, almost peremptorily.

"I've been sent to fetch my brother home. He's wanted," was the dogged answer.

"I can't part with him."

Teddy implied, by an expressive gesture, that it was absolutely necessary to take him away.

"And I sha'n't part with him. That's more!"

The little woman set her back against the door, and looked defiance to the death. Right and wrong—good and evil—stood face to face there, and paused.

CHAPTER VI.

A FAIR FIGHT.

TEDDY FERNWELL, as defender of his faith—his own dark faith in the power to do wrong—stood his ground well, though he did not admire the round little gray eyes that were fixed unflinchingly upon him. He could look people in the face for a longer time than most of his family, for he possessed a fair amount of nerves, and a fairer amount of impudence, but he rather objected to a steady conflict of eyes for all that. He looked away at last—a trifle away—at a knot in the panel over Polly Wynn's head. Polly saw her advantage, and began at once:

"You've no right to come into my house," she said.

"I'm going out of it—we're both going."

"It's an honest house."

"Well, you needn't be so proud of it—I s'pose there's another somewhere about," was the defiant answer.

"It's a house that has sheltered your poor brother, and done him good, even in the little while he's been here. And now you come to do all the harm you can by tempting him away. Oh! how I wish Martin was back!"

"Zach's my brother. Zach's tired of this game."

"Oh! don't say so, Zach!" cried Polly Wynn, setting her basket on an adjacent chair, in order to wring her hands together, "don't turn away from us—you, so young, so likely to do better away from all of them. Boy, you ought to be ashamed of yourself," she added, turning indignantly on Teddy who went back a step or two at her vehemence, "to try and rob him of the only chance that he will have."

"It's waste of time, mum," said Teddy; "it's born in us to be bad—we're the baddest family that ever was knocked together. Zach won't do you credit—it isn't as if he was a soft boy—or as if he wanted to stop werry much, and throw the lot of us overboard. If he wanted to do that—why, then, I shouldn't ride rusty; but knowing his belikings, and being, as it was, his nat'ral purtecter, why I take

his part—just as I used to when father whopped him for making faces at him.”

“He always took your part, Zach,” said Polly, appealing to her protégé at this.

“Allers,” said Zach, in somewhat of an ashamed tone—“I don’t know how I should have got on if he hadn’t. I’ve told you, mum, what a chap he was to get me out of scrapes.”

“You love your brother?” asked Polly, veering rapidly to Teddy, seeing her advantage in the argument, and seizing it with all a woman’s shrewdness.

“Eh?” said Teddy.

Polly repeated her question, and Teddy laughed ironically. Love was a funny word—he did not know if he had ever heard the word before; it jarred and jangled unpleasantly, and yet made him laugh. He had been a strong, robust, iron kind of boy, and Zach, in earlier days, had been a weak fledgling. Mr. Fernwell had been ready with his fists, his elbows, and his feet, and had been partial in early days to “dropping on” poor Zach; and Teddy, without much thought of his motives, had been in the habit of diverting attention from Zach, and coming in for his sire’s superfluous energy. Teddy did not like to see Zach knocked about unmercifully, although Zach had always been a trifle aggravating, and knocks did not hurt him—the mediator. So he ran in and took his share, and gave interest for the same as he grew bigger, stronger, and more hard. This he called taking Zach’s part—not loving Zach. What did he know of love, or what it meant?—he did not believe that he loved any body, and as for any body loving him, why he had never expected such a thing. Therefore he laughed ironically, and replied ironically also,

“Oh! I just do love Zach, and he loves me, and we both love the gov’nor uncommon. You should see us of a Sunday in our shay-cart, all with roses in our button-holes, father driving, and Zach and I on his knees, with our arms round his neck. Such a picter, mum!”

“You’re fond of pictures, then?” said little Polly.

She was put out by Teddy’s irony, but she had a battle to fight, and her heart was in her work, for she was an earnest and good woman.

“Yes,” said Teddy, dubiously.

"I'll show you two in him," pointing to Zach, who winced at her outstretched finger, and shut his eyes away from it; "if he goes with you, look at him—going away to his old life, to the life that yours has been, growing worse and worse with every year, from prison to prison, earning a worse name in each—coming to the gallows, p'r'aps, just as his mother feared, and prayed against, and all your fault—all your doing, Teddy Fernwell!"

Teddy's large eyes were distended at the speaker's warmth; he had not met a woman like this before; he did not know what to make of her, or what to say. "All his doing," she told him, just as if he had not done mischief enough for himself!

"It's the worst of lives—it can't be worse—and you take Zach to it, when he might grow better. Here's the other picture—let me breathe a bit. I'm not a learned woman—I'm not handy at words, like my brother is—let me take a breath."

She jerked her bonnet-strings away from her throat, and went on again.

"And here's the other picture, Teddy—of him."

She pointed Zach out again, who started, and closed his eyes a second time.

"A boy in the place where he's already trusted, growing up, and being trusted more, getting a place better and better, holding his head up, with people round him who are glad to see him prosper, and who thank God for it. With a home of his own, and a comfortable wife, p'r'aps, and dear little children being brought up to love him too, and to be proud of their father, who worked his way from nothing by his trust in One, who told him that the honest means were best and surest. I see all this so plain, if you don't step between, and ruin him—if you don't rob him of his chances."

Teddy scratched his head with both hands, stood holding his temples with both hands, and staring hard at the floor. He was amazed—wonderfully amazed—and the shock had been too much for him. In all his life—his fourteen years of evil, that were equal to half a dozen lives of many men—he had never heard words of comfort for himself, or for those belonging to him. He was very bad, but he was better than he believed; with half a chance offered to him

years since, he would have been a different being ; for there had been evidence of good in him, which, developed by a careful hand, might have borne fair fruit in time. No one had taken interest in him—encouragement to do wrong had been offered, nothing else—and he was of the wolf tribe rather than of humankind now.

Still he was baffled and bewildered. The woman's words hurt him, as though they had been made of iron, and hurled at his obduracy ; the picture—that last picture—was an affront to one shut out from its fair landscape, and yet he did not feel a wish to resent its obtrusion on his wretchedness. He had fallen into strange company, and the sooner he was gone the better—gone without little Zach, whom he had come to fetch away.

He was sullen over his defeat, yet—even in a war of words, he did not care to be beaten. In this new world he lost his old bravado, his insolence of gesture and quickness at retort, that sharpness of the streets for which he was already famous, Whitechapel-way. In his turn he could have overwhelmed her with his *argót*—his slang invective, that had made him famous with his own set, but would have been Greek or Hebrew to Polly Wynn. But he was humiliated—cowed ; and, above all, there was a strange unaccountable fluttering at his heart, that rendered him unlike himself, and kept him looking down as though afraid of her. He should be very glad to get away.

"Zach," he whispered, "you'd better stay."

"That's well—that's well!" cried Polly, clapping her hands in enthusiasm. "You're not so bad to say that. Why, there's hope for you, if you wish him a better life than yours!"

"I can't wish him a wus at any rate," said Teddy sharply. "Zach," he added, turning to his brother, "*she's* right. Try your luck here, and keep quiet—you may turn out all she says, if you keep your mouth shut about *us*. You're in a place—that's a start-off which I never got—which I never tried to get," it was a sad laugh at this juncture ; "and arter all, to come back with me isn't much use now. I'm hard up, and the guv'nor will be ; and why I wanted you back, I don't know. It warn't kind, jiggered if it was! You stop."

"If I only thought that I should get on," said Zach, ruefully. "Oh! if I liked work a little better!"

"One work is so slow—so hard for the likes of us, always moving here and there, mum," explained Teddy to Miss Wynn; "it's a complaint we tramps get."

"Oh! is it?—poor things!" said Polly.

"It's life we see," Teddy continued to explain; "here and every where—fairs, races, fires, theyaters, Lord-mayor's shows, and fights; but Zach's younger, he'll get over it—he'll put up with work. Stop here, young feller, and try a change. Why, it was only my larks, pretending to take you away—I never meant it."

"Yes, you did," was the reply to this.

"And you never meant to go with me—why, I ain't got a lodging any where, and shall have to knock about all night at *the old game*. Stop here," he reiterated, "and learn manners, and get a cut above us all, and leave *him* and me on the prowl—just as we used—just as we shall be, keeping the ball a-rolling to the gallows as you say, mum."

"But you—why, a boy, too—may—" began Polly.

"May do wonders," he interrupted. "I'd rayther not hear any think about myself—I've heard enough to bust me about him! I don't make it all out—I sha'n't try—I don't care—don't want. Stop here, Zach, and never think on me any more—never any more, young feller!"

"You'll come and see us. Oh! he may come and see us, Polly, now and then," said Zach; "he's a good sort, when you know him, Teddy is—every body likes Teddy."

"If he don't come to tempt you—now and then, he may call," Polly said, with a little natural hesitation.

"Thankee," said Teddy dropping into the sullen mood again, and moving toward the door. He looked back at Zach, and said once more,

"Stop here, and try your luck. Stop with *her*, Zach—mind you try and stop till I come agin."

"All right. I will stop," said Zach with greater confidence.

Teddy went down stairs, followed by Polly, who was resolved to see him safely out of the house. He had expected her descent with him, and was waiting for her on the doorstep. He turned upon her with a fierceness for which she was unprepared, and caught her by the wrist in a vice-like grip that drew from her a stifled cry.

"You know what you've been and done — what you're going to do?"

"To try and save one soul from the devil — for the sake of her who was once my mistress — for the sake of himself, too, poor fellow — and for the sake of God, most of all."

"I don't know that lingo—church lingo's a cut above me. But you're a-going to set Zach against us."

"No—not that."

"Away from us — it's all the same. Well, that Zach — that boy up stairs, is the only cove who ever took a fancy to me in any way whatsoever—and he was a rum little chap hisself, and I liked him more nor I can tell you. We were like a couple of puppies brought up together, missus, till the old woman parted us. And I sha'n't see the little beggar agin—never!"

"Never!"

"No—that's wot it's come to—for I can't come to this place, and he mustn't come to ours, and so he's like a dead Zach. Well, so much the better — who's a-grieving over it — I ain't!"

"You're an odd boy," said Polly reflectively; "you're harder to make out than your brother."

"I don't ax you to try — nobody axed you to try," said Teddy; "you've no right to come a-trying to make coves good who don't want to, mind."

"Yes, I have," said Polly quietly.

"You've no right to make Zach one, or to go and tell me that I was a-robbing him of his chance — what did you say that for?"

"You would have taken him away just as he was turning a better boy."

"I ain't took him—I ain't took nothin'. I ain't sorry that he ain't coming back. He's a sharp little chap, and it will be a lark to see him growing up 'spectable—my eye!"

"Good-night," said Polly; "try and grow better yourself to keep him company. Try and think that it isn't such very hard work to turn away from evil."

"Ah! it won't fit with me," said Teddy ironically; "that game can't answer with us old uns. *Lor' bless you! I've heerd lots of preaching down our street; there's a cove comes there, and stands upon a stool, and bawls his head

arf off, and swears at us, and sings Sunday tunes — but it don't do!"

"Ah! it don't do good to you, you mean?"

"You should hear the guv'nor take him off when he's in good spirits—you wouldn't know one from t'other."

"Good-night, Teddy. And you—you won't come too often?" she added, quite nervously.

"Oh! you don't want me to grow good, then, by coming here?" was the quick answer.

"God forgive me! but I am more afraid of the harm you'll do to Zach, than hopeful of any good in you. You are so hard—so hard! But come if you like—it may help you to a better thought or two—come and see us when my dear brother is back again from France."

"I sha'n't come no more," said Teddy, becoming suddenly fierce again; "you keep your dear brother all to yourself as well as mine, old gal. Here!"

He extended his hand toward her so suddenly, that she started back as from a blow aimed at her. Teddy's was a galvanic action in a soulless body almost, and was without grace in consequence.

"What is it?" asked Polly.

"You left it about," he said harshly; "you shouldn't leave things about when people comes here—people like me!"

"My thimble—Zach's present!" exclaimed Polly in amazement.

"You shouldn't leave silver things about," again reprimanded Teddy. "I picks up silver things when I can—any where, and it doesn't matter whose."

"I put it in the tea-pot," said Polly in defense, and still struggling with her amazement.

"Lock it up another time."

These were Teddy's last words—his last advice. He thrust both hands into his pockets, and walked away down the muddy street, taking immense strides, and so vanishing away speedily into the outer darkness, wherein it seemed more natural for such as he to exist. Turning the corner of the first street, Teddy's pace was altered, and he dropped into a loose, slouching kind of tramp, keeping always to the house walls, and the shadows that lurked there. At the corner of Stamford Street he paused again, shook himself

like a dog, and appeared to deliberate as to his future course; finally slouching on once more in the direction of the Waterloo Road. Before the terminus of the South-western Railway he stopped to think again, to watch the people who went in and out there, with a lynx-like gaze, that told of "the business" to which the devil had apprenticed him. He moved on, however, after a while, as though business was unprofitable that evening, crossed the Lower Marsh, looked in through the gin-shop doors at the revelers pouring their Saturday's wages down their throats as rapidly as possible, mixed with the crowds of people marketing, stopped with a hundred loiterers to hear a nautical song yelled forth by a man on wooden legs—a man who had fought with Nelson, according to the plaster on his chest, and a man who knew Teddy, and winked at him in quiet recognition.

Suddenly Teddy backed out of the crowd, and took up his position against the nearest lamp-post, facing a fancy clothier's, where waistcoats of gorgeous hues were to be had for two-and-ninepence, and were hanging in rows along the front of the house, as if in mimicry of next door's Ostend rabbits, arranged in similar fashion from iron supports of the shop-blind, and catching the hats of passers-by occasionally. Here Teddy went into deeper thought than ever—far-away thoughts, that would have held him spell-bound for a longer period, had not the clothier's young man—a youth with a hooked nose and the slobbery accent peculiar to Hebrews—suggested that he knew what he was standing there for, and that he'd better be off before the next policeman came. Teddy made a wry face and retired. His thoughts had been disturbed, but they seemed to give birth to action. He crossed into the road, and began to run along the Marsh, into the Waterloo Road, back to Stamford Street and Upper Ground Street. He passed the house where he had parted with his brother—it was not there that he intended to call, at least; he went on to the great archway, beneath which his mother had died, and rung the bell at the side of the gates, on which the name of Henwood was inscribed.

Here he waited patiently, till the feet of Mr. Wynn, watchman for the night, were heard advancing, till the trap in the gates was opened a little way, and the head of Mr.

Wynn, looking more Punch-like with cold and blueness, peered through at him.

"What is it?"

"I'm Zach's brother—I want to speak to you."

"Oh! dear, are you?—what, another of you?—what's the matter?"

"I've been to see Zach—he's going to grow up good, he says—he's going to try, at all events, and the woman there will help him."

"She's a good girl—no one will know it better than Zach some day."

"I've come to ax you to get away from here—to change your lodging, and not tell any one where you've gone to—not any one, or he'll find you out."

"Who'll find me out, did you say?"

"My father, who wants Zach home—don't you see?" he added, becoming peevish at Mr. Wynn's obtuseness; "you must get away altogether. Can't they make you watchman somewhere else? Down by the Docks there, at the t'other place?"

"Why, how did you know any thing about a t'other place?"

"I knows a lot of things—you'll move?"

"I can't move away from my night's work."

"Then move your room, guv'nor—try that. He don't know any think about you yet, but he's as downy as the devil hisself, and I sha'n't be able to keep him off the scent long, if he wants the kid."

"Are you Teddy?"

"I'm the bad un that stopped with father—Zach's the good un that went away on the quiet with his mother. Ah! take a good squint at us, old man, you won't see such a fine sort every day."

Mr. Wynn had held his lantern close to the trap, and the lad, who observed every thing, had rather objected to this curiosity. It was against Teddy's business, too, to be well known—an insult to his profession to look at him too hard.

"You needn't be so imperent, boy," reprov'd Mr. Wynn.

"You needn't look at me," said Teddy, in reply—"you'll never see me no more. I'm going to leave the lot of you to yourselves, and give Zach his chance to grow 'spectable. I shall walk the guv'nor out of town agin as soon as I can,

and we sha'n't be heerd on unless the noosepapers takes liberties with our names. You'll move your crib, now, won't you?"

"I'll consider of it; but I can't see what good it can do."

"And—oh! I'd somethink else to tell you, only your dog keeps a-barking and a-barking, and making me forget things—and you won't be down upon Zach too much, or leave things in his way just yet, and he'll get on, and grow up a credit to you. He's not like me, you know; he's two years younger; don't be down upon him first go off, but let that little woman talk to him, jest as she did to me. I've been a-thinking of Zach, oh! ever so long now; and she's right, lor' bless you! that little woman's as right as ninepence. I never seed any one like her before, and Zach's a young un and not hard as nails like me. That's all—shut up, old boy!"

Teddy moved on suddenly; and the watchman leaned forward and looked after him, scarcely able to comprehend why his night-watch had been thus unceremoniously disturbed. He was disturbed himself, too, by this apparition—this second Fernwell who had called to offer him advice. He looked after Teddy, till the angle of the wall shut him from view, and then he closed the trap for the night again, and proceeded to reflect upon the advice that had been proffered him.

Meanwhile Teddy had paused before the house, to look up at the lighted window of the room wherein he had surprised his brother. The hour was growing late now, but Teddy was in no hurry to proceed homeward. He stood with his back to the wall, his hands in his pockets still, his eyes fixed upward at the window-blind, very rigid, very watchful, very full of thought. This was a matter for wonderment, for Teddy was not a thoughtful youth. He had never given a thought beyond the passing hour, and those who were to be duped therein, those respectable members of society with whom he was at war. Was he thinking of Zach's chance, and wondering why it had come, or what would follow it; contrasting Zach's future with his own; seeing again, as if by magic, he and his brother the central figures in those pictures which Polly Wynn had drawn for him? He was unsettled and unlike himself that night. He knew it, too, for he shook himself in his old dog-like fashion,

and muttering "This won't do!" went on again to that darker, denser world, whence his brother Zach had issued.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PASSENGERS BY THE BOULOGNE BOAT.

A FEW weeks after the visit of Teddy Fernwell to Upper Ground Street, that fast and favorite screw-steamer, the *Ariadne*, left Boulogne Harbor for Folkestone—left under favorable circumstances on the finest day for crossing the Channel that had been seen that year; with a blue sky overhead, a sea comparatively smooth, a breeze that was only fresh and invigorating, and seemed scarcely capable of giving an extra curve to the waves at play that morning. It was a morning for which one passenger, at least, had waited anxiously, looking out from the hotel windows every day, and taking the long succession of "nor'-easters" as an affront to herself—a plot between "mine host" and the elements, to detain her in that musty-smelling hotel, where business was not over-brisk at that time.

The lady who waited for fine weather, and who would have waited all the days of her life rather than have had foul weather for her homeward journey, took her place on board the *Ariadne* with much pomp of circumstance, attended by "mine host" to the last, and by a crowd of supernumerary *garçons*, including the closely-cropped, clean-shaven young man who had been sent to the end of the pier twice a day for the last six weeks, to note how things looked out at sea, and who hated the sea, and had grown bilious watching it for Madame.

The sea, at last, was peaceable, and Madame was on ship-board; wrapped in sables, heaped in shawls, with the crown of a girlish hat visible above the pile of costly material in which she was enshrined. Her servants—her own servants—were about her rendering her comfortable, long after the steam-packet had sailed from La Belle France. There was one red-nosed woman arranging a small portmanteau for her feet; and another, with a blue nose, pinched with cold, tucking in the shawl again; and a third maiden, very prim and angular, at a respectful distance on the seat, ready for

any orders that might be given her, and evidently feeling "qualmish," despite the fineness of the weather; and there was a fourth lady, a nursery governess, in charge of a pale-faced girl of twelve years old, also at a respectful distance opposite, but watchful for orders, either from mother or child, and knowing her duty, and feeling "qualmish" also—just a little—and hoping that the orders would come before she felt too indisposed to attend to them.

There were not many passengers, outward or homeward bound that day. A few gentlemen of commercial aspect, all in water-proof or heavy cloaks, as though they had less confidence in the weather than Madame; a stout old gentleman, whom it was whispered was a real lord, accompanied by a real lady, who had gone below for warmth and comfort; a handful of French and German nondescripts in search of pleasure—in search of orders for brandies and kid gloves—in search of higher wages in perfidious Albion; a few more ladies, who were below deck; a tall, good-looking, but swarthy Englishman, with red and nubby hands that scorned gloves, or had been ungloved for a better hold of another child of twelve years old, pretty and rosy-cheeked, and altogether worth admiring, who sat on his knee and looked at the swirl of water struggling with the paddle-wheel.

The man with the child had chosen that end of the boat whither the *élite* of the travelers had congregated; and as the passengers settled into shape and something like quiescence, it might have been observed that the lady in the cloaks, and shawls, and sables, looked more than once intently at the child a little way apart from her, and seemed to contrast it with her own pale-faced and passive daughter. The children were certainly a contrast—one all life and health, interested in every thing about her, and anxious for full explanations; the other staring straight ahead, with a look expressive of no interest in any thing.

The face of the lady who had waited long, if not patiently, for fine weather, emerged now from its surroundings, and was turned right, then left.

"The boat rocks very much, Simkins," she said to attendant number one, as though it was Simkins's fault, and therefore to be remarked at once, and put a stop to.

"Yes, ma'am; it's not so steady as I thought it would be.

Might I suggest that the rest of the ladies are in the cabin, and that you might not feel the rocking there?"

"Suggest what you please, Simkins, only do not expect me to follow your suggestions. Why have I been wishing for a fine day, but that I might remain on deck, and not add to the unpleasantness of this sea-voyage? What have I got a fine day for?" she asked, as though it had been booked expressly for her, along with the places for herself and *cor-tège*.

"Quite true, ma'am," said Simkins, subsiding into herself after this reproof.

"Drewitt," the lady said to attendant number two, "my smelling-salts. Drewitt," she added after the smelling-salts were in her daintily-gloved hand, "I should like to see the captain—ask him to be kind enough to step this way?"

Drewitt departed on that special errand, and returned looking somewhat discomfited.

"The captain's very busy just now, madam, and can not leave the paddle-box."

"I don't see any thing to make him busy," she answered, querulously.

Madam retired into her surroundings again, leaving a long sharp nose and a pair of little brown eyes visible above the upper stratum of Cashmere. It might have been observed that the little brown eyes turned again more than once in the direction of the man and child, as though their presence before her was an attraction, despite of herself. The child had grown tired of her survey of the paddle-wheels by this time, and was listening to a story of her father's—listening intently, and laughing also, fair evidence of the sire being a good story-teller. The lady condescended to think of the difference between her own child and the child before her—both of the same age, both fair-haired girls, one full of life, and the other to all appearance almost weary of it already—one with rosy cheeks, and the other white as marble. She had not observed so great a difference before—her Lettice she had fancied was a delicate, but an excessively genteel child, until the daughter of that strange, red-handed, swarthy man presented herself, the picture of health, before her. And yet she was positive that not half the care had been bestowed upon the little stranger as upon Lettice—not half the watch kept over her, not one hundredth part

of the money lavished on her. The father was evidently a working-man—a superior mechanic, perhaps a foreman somewhere—and no doubt neglected his children, after the fashion of such people! Possibly the air had something to do with the contrast, for a sea-voyage did not agree with Lettice any more than with her mother, let them wait never so long for fine weather. Lettice was turning green, she was sure of it—it was all the nasty boat, which might have rocked less, she was certain, if the captain had only taken more care; but when did captains of vessels consider the feelings of the passengers? The lady was very cold, but she would not venture into the cabin—she knew what cabins were like in the best of times, and it was better to sit in the fresh air and shiver. She had been advised not to go below by the last physician whom she had consulted at Boulogne, and she had not paid a heavy fee for nothing—that was not her way! She was vexed very much at the rocking of the boat, and surprised not a little at the sailors coming up in water-proof coats and coal-heavers' hats; the sun was bright enough, they would be on English ground in an hour and a half, and though the wind blew sharply across the sea now, it remained still the fine day for which she had bargained.

Thinking of these things—of little else, for she was a lady who took no great degree of interest in matters not affecting her own welfare, it may be premised—she had forgotten to observe her fellow-passengers for a while. Waking suddenly to consciousness of outward things, her head came completely out of her wrappings, like the head of a Jack-in-the-box, in her new amazement. It had been a handsome head once, with youth, and youth's freshness to tone the sharpness of the features; but the good looks had almost vanished with her five-and-thirty years, and the face was already pinched and angular—a hatchet kind of face, to which a dab of rouge on either cheek brought back few signs of juvenescence. No rosy bloom, no pearl-powder, no side curls from Paris—where they are great in side curls—no gipsy hat, with white feather, cocked upon the head, could make that lady a year younger in appearance—she was unquestionably five-and-thirty years of age—going on for forty rapidly; and had she branded that fact upon her forehead, it could not have been more readily apparent. She was not aware of it herself, for riches had brought her the

usual tribes of flatterers and toadies, and were not the maids paid handsomely to make themselves agreeable? She had improved her appearance by this making-up, however, for shorn of these decorations she looked ten years more than her natural age, her maids whispered to each other, and it was scarcely a face to love or take to when the foreign bloom was brushed away from it.

That face expressed amazement, then—amazement verging upon horror. The child whom she had envied for her bright looks and happy face had stolen to the side of her daughter, and both of them were actually in conversation! That was the governess's fault—the governess who had suddenly made a dash for the cabin, with a white handkerchief to her mouth, and left an under-nurse to the charge of such a child as hers!

"Lettice!" she cried, sharply; but Lettice was betraying a little interest for once, and the voice of the mother passed unheeded, and was carried out to sea by the wind. The lady became animated, and even excited; she looked round for Simkins, who was sitting with closed eyes, and hands upon her chest, trying not to believe she was at sea; she looked for Drewitt, but Drewitt was not to be perceived any where, and had already preceded the governess below; while the fourth of the staff was flirting with the steward's boy behind the funnel.

"Simkins!" she cried more sharply still; but Simkins was deaf, or asleep, or reckless of the consequences of disobedience to orders, and no heed was paid to the old familiar tones.

The lady became more excited, and would have struggled from her wrappings, had she not been too carefully wound up, mummy-fashion, by her late attendants. Only one arm managed to free itself and beckon toward the daughter, who was becoming more animated every instant, and who would not see her; she was sure that it was intentional perverseness on the part of Lettice.

The lady turned to the man at last, sitting with his nubby hands upon his knees, watching the two children intently.

"Sir—you, sir!" she cried, "take your child away, if you please, from mine."

"Has yours got any thing catching, then?" cried the man addressed, springing to his feet with alacrity. "What's—what's the matter with her?"

"I do not allow my daughter to converse with strangers," said the lady hurriedly and even warmly. "You will oblige me by—"

"Oh, let them talk, madam," said the father, taking his seat by the lady's side to her farther consternation; "it will do them both good. I always like to see children friendly toward each other. It will be time enough for ceremony when they've long skirts, and are better up in the 'proprieties.' If you hammer into your girl's head a heap of stuck-up nonsense at her age, she'll be a nuisance, even to you, when she grows older. You'll excuse me speaking frankly. I have a bad habit of speaking out, my friends say. I tell them, it's the best habit that I've got."

The lady would have withdrawn herself from this rude being without a word, had the power been in her hands; she was shocked at his want of ceremony, his impertinence in addressing her. He should have known better; he should have been able to see with a glance their immense difference in position, and to have been awed by it, as the world in general was awed, or where would have been the satisfaction of her high estate? But he spoke as to an equal, and if not intentionally rude, still there was no more excuse for his abstruseness than for his intrusion. If those wretches had not fastened her down so tightly! What ever had they done to the wrappers and shawls, she wondered!

"There are times for speaking out, and times when it is common courtesy to be silent," replied the lady after a second ineffectual effort to free herself from her trappings.

She could not escape from the man—she would, therefore, wither him up with her disdain. She looked him in the face while she addressed him, but he did not flinch. It was a fine manly face, lit up with two large brown eyes, and set off by a bushy pair of brown whiskers; somewhat of a large face, with a smile that seemed natural to it, and might have won upon softer hearts than the lady's, and yet a smile that did not detract from an intentness or an earnestness of expression natural to it also. Evidently the face of a good-tempered man, but none the less objectionable to her. Of the two, she preferred a sour face; it was more classical, and looked at life less frivolously. As for this face, she would have liked to strike it with her parasol, for its obtrusiveness—its want of reverence for her.

"I wouldn't lose my temper, madam, or feel hurt because my girl and yours have exchanged a few words," he said more gravely; "mine may do yours a wonderful deal of good, for she's the best girl in the world, I think. Upon my honor, I don't believe there's such another."

"Indeed!" said the lady dryly.

"One thing worries me; but I think each child has a certain fault, failing, or something to worry its father or mother through life."

The lady started, and looked at the speaker once more. Those last words had struck home, for they affected her case somewhat. In her life—in the short life of her daughter Lettice—there had been much to worry her, and this man seemed to guess it. He made her curious to hear more; and in her curiosity she forgot that Lettice was still talking to the little stranger.

"What fault has your girl, may I ask—boldness?"

Curious as she was, she could not refrain from launching a little arrow with her inquiry, but the arrow never took effect, which was aggravating.

"I did not say that Christie had a fault," he corrected; "but there's a something in her, madam, that keeps me anxious concerning her. She's rather an old sort of child, you see."

"How should I see?" said the lady, taking up his phrase.

"You would see if you had the pleasure of her acquaintance," said the father; "which you have not, and are never likely to have—so much the worse for you. But my Christie is too old for her years, try all I can to alter it, and make myself younger in thought and action than I really am—to become her playfellow, even, when there's an hour to spare. I find her all the playmates that I can—for I never lose an opportunity of launching her into child's society, abroad or at home. At home you see—you would see," he corrected this time, "that she has begun housekeeping early, and is my little housekeeper as well as daughter—clever in her way, quick at accounts, brisk and business-like enough for twice her age. So with a woman's work before her, she grows too woman-like occasionally, though I fight hard to keep her still a child. The longer a girl remains a child, the better, I think."

"You are a deep thinker, it appears," said the lady, listlessly.

"I have time to think—and my work gives me the chance," he answered.

"You *are* a workman, then?"

"Oh! yes. What did you fancy I was?"

"I did not fancy any thing about you."

"You seemed surprised."

"Not at all," she answered, peevishly.

"Oh! yes, you did," he re-asserted; "and I don't see why you should be ashamed to own it, any more than I should be ashamed of my craft. It's rather odd," he added again, "that you and I should become so friendly all of a sudden."

"You have forced your conversation upon me, and I have been unable to escape it, sir," said the lady, suddenly putting on her most dignified demeanor; "you have forgotten your own position in life, and what is due to *me*! Oblige me by taking yourself and daughter as far from us as possible—that will be some apology for this intrusion."

She found her smelling-salts, and sought consolation from them on the spot. To think that a workman—a common workman—should dare to address her, crossing from Boulogne to Folkestone. And not even a French workman, who would have called her "Madame," and stood with his cap raised from his head, the very picture of humility; but an English workman, who might be going up a ladder to-morrow with a hod of bricks on his shoulder! She was not able to forgive herself for having addressed a word to him; it was unlike her usual manner, and it was quite time—more than quite time—to stand upon that dignity which had carried her so well through life, and—won so little love toward her!

But then there was no shaking this man off—he *would* talk, and he would start such extraordinary topics. He was actually beginning again, looking quite gravely at her, as though she were an object of pity as well as interest to him.

"I am sorry if I have hurt your feelings," he said; "I don't regard position much myself—and I am never awed by other people's! *But*," he said, with emphasis, "I am more sorry—fifty times more sorry—to see a woman of your years—"

"My goodness!" ejaculated the mummy.

"A woman of your years," he repeated, "taking to yourself credit for the wealth that has been made for you, found for you, or bequeathed to you—that is something to be sorry for! It is not excusable in a man, who may have hewn out his own fortune—but in a woman, to whom we look for excellence, it is almost unpardonable. Why, you read your Bible, surely?"

"If you—if you don't go, I shall be obliged to call for assistance to remove you. How dare you behave like this to me, and talk to me about my Bible? Where's Simkins?—where's Drewitt?—Lettice, come here!"

Lettice advanced at last across the deck toward her mother, and received a sudden shaking from the hand that had released itself at an earlier period. The workman doubtful yet where he had given offense, and puzzled by the lady's pride as she had been puzzled by his brusqueness, walked away with Christie—walked up and down the deck to keep the blood in circulation. The passengers were nearly all below stairs—the sun had disappeared behind a pile of vapory cloud, that seemed very rapidly increasing in density; the wind made a dismal whistling among the rigging, and the ship began to dance quite ominously. Suddenly the stewardess, with a bonnet on, and two hands to her bonnet, made a dash from the cabin to the deck, and approached the lady who had been grievously offended, and who was flushed in the face still with indignation.

"Don't you think, ma'am, that it would be better to come down stairs?" she suggested.

"When shall we reach Folkestone?"

"In an hour and a half, ma'am."

"Then you'll be behind time?"

"Yes—the wind is against us."

"That's no business of mine," snapped the lady, "and you have no business to put down one time in your bills and mean another. How am I to reach London, do you think, in time for dinner?"

The stewardess had evidently not given much thought to that important part of the passenger's duties. She looked a little dismayed at the lady's fierceness, and took refuge in her old advice, that the cabin was the best place for the fair sex at that period.

"I shall stay here," said the lady, firmly. "I was told

that it would be a fine day for crossing the Channel, and if you've all deceived me, you must take the consequences."

"Very well, ma'am," said the stewardess, demurely.

"And where are all my servants? I insist upon my servants coming up, and Miss Lettice's governess coming up too. Why are we left alone here to be insulted by strange people, I should like to know? Where are they all?"

"If you please, they're very sick, ma'am—dreadfully sick!"

"What, all of them?"

"Yes, ma'am, all!"

"Then they have no right to be so inconsiderate," asserted the lady. "Tell them I insist upon being attended to, at once. My daughter and I can't be left here alone, exposed to the insults of every rude creature on board."

"If any one has insulted—"

"Will you deliver my message to the servant, or must I take it myself?" demanded the lady, at this juncture.

The stewardess hesitated, evidently seemed inclined to deliver a small piece of her mind, by way of return for all this contumely, thought better of her inclination, and flounced down the stairs of the lady's cabin, to detail her grievances to any one disposed to hear them. Meanwhile the decks were almost clear of passengers; the dealers in kid gloves and brandies had vanished with the sun, the commercial men bound homeward and outward, the gentry coming back in haste for "the season," had all quitted the deck, leaving it to the sailors, and those eccentric people to whom we have especially directed our readers' attention.

"I think that you had better go down stairs, Christie," said the father; "we shall have the sea over here presently, and then you'll have all these fine things wet."

"The wet don't hurt them, father," said the child. "I would rather stop here with you—you'll be so dull without me."

"Why, that's a good joke, Chris!" and the sturdy father held his daughter for an instant at arm's-length, and laughed at her.

"You're always dull without me, though you don't say so," said Christie. "Why, what would you have done in Paris with no daughter to take care of you as usual?"

"Ah! I don't know!" said the other, "and not knowing accounts for my making a traveler of you, my girl. What a heap of news for grandpa and Aunt Polly, Christie."

"Yes, indeed! And news to hear too."

"To be sure! You must tell them of the little girl whom you have met to-day—the first real lady of your acquaintance, Christie."

"Is she a real young lady?"

"Quite real," said the other, dryly. "What do you think of her?"

"She's very old-fashioned, father!"

"That's a good joke!—that's the best of jokes!" laughed Mr. Martin Wynn—for we need make no secret of that gentleman's name.

"She talks like a little woman who has seen the world, father," said Christie; "talks about her wardrobe, and her jewel-box, and her mother's new house at Wimbledon, that she has not seen yet, and the years that she has been in Paris, until she has forgotten what England is like. Talks without smiling—*so!*"

And Christie Wynn pursed her lips together, and spoke through them in an indistinct fashion.

"That'll do, Chris," said Mr. Wynn; "we call that taking people off, and it is a bad habit to grow upon you—drop that as soon as you like, my dear. Laugh with every body, but *at* no one, and so through life with no one to hate us for our bad opinion. Were you very much afraid when you heard how grand the young lady was?"

"Not at all."

"Nor I of the mother—she's rather a Tartar, though," he added, in a lower tone, "and must have found it precious hard to carry that pride—all that big lump of pride—through life with her. How it must have got in her own way, as well as in other people's, poor woman!"

Meanwhile the poor woman had found means to disinter one attendant from the bowels of the ship—the much-abused Simkins again, now of a pale green tint, with yellow eyes. Simkins was sick, and on the verge of opposition to all sub-lunary mandates; it had been a struggle to leave the cabin, and toil up stairs to receive her mistress's scolding; she had thought twice of the ordeal, but more than twice of the good salary, the perquisites, the two black silk dresses that

would be hers next month, and were not half worn out either—one would turn beautifully, she was certain—and she had made her appearance upon deck, distressed in mind and stomach though she was.

"Where's Drewitt and the other?—where's Miss Evershed?—where's the page?"

"William is in the other cabin, ma'am; and the rest won't come."

"Won't come!"

"They're dreadfully sick, ma'am—Miss Evershed's a sight. I never did see a poor thing so terribly knocked over in all my life! And as for myself—"

"There, take your dreadful face away!" said her mistress; "you make me ill to see you! Take Miss Lettice down stairs, and come up here in half an hour, and see how I'm getting on; and whatever made you tie me up in this dreadful Guy Fawkes fashion—how have you done it?"

"Oh! my head!—oh! how they do rock the boat about, ma'am, to be sure! Do you think that we shall ever get home alive?"

"You—you vile woman, how dare you try to frighten me like this!" exclaimed her mistress; "unfasten me a bit, and go away. Get there alive!—good heaven! what an expression, Simkins!"

Simkins withdrew with Lettice, after loosening the wrappers round her mistress. Presently Mr. Wynn held a consultation with his daughter, who was not strong enough to keep her feet, as the boat rocked more and more unpleasantly, and finally passed her down the cabin stairs into the outstretched arms of the stewardess below. By this time the sky looking gray and angry, the wind rising more furiously, the water leaping over the deck with every plunge of the vessel, the captain busy with his orders, the crew on the alert to obey them, the obstinate woman holding her ground still, Martin Wynn marching to and fro when the opportunity presented itself, and clinging to the ship's ropes when it did not.

A sailor more than once advanced to tender his unsolicited advice to the lady—to offer a message from the captain, who was watching her as well as the weather, and somewhat annoyed at the two of them being in the way just then.

"I'm never well below—I'll stay here, if you please."

"The captain's afraid of you being pitched about, mum," said a second sailor; "you're much safer in the cabin."

"Is there any danger?" and the lady looked up with a face that would have changed color more, had the color been less permanent.

"Lor' bless you, no, mum!"

"Not the least?"

"We've had fifty times dirtier weather than this," replied the sailor; "you're as safe here as at home, mum; only if we do ship a heavy sea, you'll catch it. If there was danger we should clap on the hatches—this is only a bit breezy."

"Then I'll stay here."

Lastly, the captain came, and politely suggested the expediency of her retirement, and still the lady held firm and remained defiant. She was always ill in the cabin, and she preferred to remain on deck, at all hazards. Farther attempts to persuade her to retire were given up after that; the ship was not in danger, the lady had only her own comfort to study, if she were knocked over, or even drenched by a heavier sea than usual—that was her fault, after all these warnings.

A somewhat amused watcher of all this was Mr. Martin Wynn; he was interested in the lady, or he was a student of human nature who let nothing escape him, and here was a specimen worthy his observation. He made no farther attempt to intrude upon her dignity, but stood some little distance away, swaying backward and forward with the ship, and retaining always a good grip of the adjacent rope. Fear of harm to herself was only second to the lady's fear of sea-sickness, however; she was not comfortable in her present position; little screams escaped her now and then, and her hands, less prisoners than of yore, clutched tenaciously at the seat with every rock of the vessel. Rouge and pearl-powder could not keep that face from betraying its pallor at least—even rendered it more hideous by force of contrast, the unnatural bloom standing out in bas-relief against a still more unnatural greenness of complexion. She looked toward Martin Wynn every instant; she would have been almost glad of his companionship now, of his assuring voice, and still more assuring smile; she hoped in her heart

that he would not go away with the rest of the passengers, and leave her swinging about on that dreadful boat by herself. If it were possible that she was in danger there—if the ship should go down with all hands, what a dreadful end to her life, what an unfortunate woman to wait so long and persistently for the day of her own doom! Then she screamed again—this time long and vigorously—for the vessel dived savagely into the trough of the sea, and over came a huge wave, that broke with full force above her, bearing her completely down, bringing her upon her hands and knees—a pitiable object enough for a lady of position—and dashing from her head the coquettish gipsy hat and one heavy bunch of curls. She was still screaming, when Mr. Martin Wynn had placed her back in her seat, and was sitting by her side with one arm passed lovingly round her waist, and the disengaged hand re-arranging her disordered head-gear.

"Where am I now?—what has happened?" she ejaculated.

"You're all right, ma'am," said Martin; "it's a livelier sea than usual—nothing more. I enjoy such weather as this myself."

"You brute!"

"Thank you, ma'am—but it was an observation not intended to be uttered brutally. You're not hurt?"

"How can I be otherwise? Oh! dear, dear, this shock will kill me! I am not used to shocks—I was never constituted to bear them!"

"We don't know what we may have to bear before we die," said Martin Wynn; "we don't know—hold tight, here comes another!"

The lady clung frantically to Martin Wynn, put her arms round his neck, and screamed again. The ship lurched, the sea dashed over them, the captain turned his back to enjoy a quiet laugh to himself, the sailors laughed long and loudly, without any attempt to conceal their sense of enjoyment.

"I—I think I'll go down stairs now—I'm feeling very ill. Oh! this dreadful boat!—I'll write to the proprietors about it as soon as ever I get on shore. Will you see me to the cabin stairs, please?"

"If you're not ashamed to be seen with me," said Martin,

with good-humored satire; "we're forgetting our social positions again—and it's your fault this time!"

"Never mind that now," said the lady faintly, and missing in her faintness the point of the joke—one never *can* appreciate a joke with sea-sickness coming on. "That need not distress you. You have been of assistance to me, and I am very much obliged to you."

"Come—that's more humble. I didn't like your pride, to tell you the truth—though I never shirk the truth, for that matter—and when you ask if there were any danger, it struck me if there had been, it would have been the worse for you, going to the bottom with all that pride, like a stone, round your neck."

"I don't know what you mean—don't talk any more, please. Get me to the cabin stairs, and call the stewardess—I'm dreadfully ill!"

"Ah! women can't stand this kind of sea," said Martin. "You'll be better when you have—have got down stairs," he added, evidently correcting himself. "Hold fast to my arm, and a fig for decorum. Here comes the sea again—now, we'll run for it."

And away trotted the lady and her escort, the lady displaying extraordinary agility, and a pair of very thin legs, in her haste to reach the cabin stairs. At the top of the stairs an obstacle met them in the shape of a wooden barrier to the wind and sea.

"Oh! dear—they've shut out all the air—I shall die down there. If—if you'll only take care of me on deck, my good man, I think that it will be better for me."

"The roughest weather's to come," said he, knocking at the closed door; "you'll be happier with the rest of 'em—that is, you'll be so queer, you won't much care whether you sink or swim—up here will keep you very nervous. You are a nervous woman?"

"Sometimes—oh! dear, what a time they are. How *is* this opened?"

"Here, ma'am, take care of this," he said, thrusting into her hand the bunch of curls, that he had retained all this time; "nobody has seen it, if that's any consolation—they had quite enough to laugh at without it, and so I kept the joke from them, such as it was. I don't like to see a woman laughed at—even a woman's vanity held up to ridicule."

"Thank you," said the lady, meekly. The man was an incomprehensibility, and even in her sickness she wondered at him, as at a dream-figure that was part of her troubled vision just then. The cabin door was opened, and the lady fell into the arms of the stewardess, and surrendered at discretion.

"How's my Christie?" asked Wynn anxiously of the attendant.

"She's very sick, sir; but she says she doesn't mind it much."

"Tell her that I say that it'll do her a great deal of good, and she ought to be thankful for it," he cried, beating a hasty retreat from the vicinity of the cabin nevertheless. He could not think of words any more assuring at the moment, though he desired to send a message of comfort to his little one; he was evidently a loving father, as well as a thoughtful man. He took up his old position on deck; he enjoyed the sea, the plunge of the ship, and the good fight she made through the waves; this was a great change for him, and he admired it. He had been hard at work for months in Paris, and a sea-breeze in any shape was a something to be grateful for.

He was inclined to soliloquize, and though we are not fond of soliloquies in novels, and consider them bad vehicles for the display of our puppets' thoughts, still we put this one in print, in order that the reader may understand Martin Wynn better than the lady did whom he had escorted to the cabin stairs.

"Supposing that there were danger—more than danger," he thought, or said half aloud, it matters little which, "and down we all went to the bottom, and were heard of never again? All that poor woman's pride, her little vanity, and wretched selfishness, all my faults and failings, my pride in my self-culture, such as it is, and my love for little Christie, going down too, with all the rest! What an end to many lives of scheming—to my own foolish dreams—what a strange affair for the old man to live me out, me and his grandchild, and have only Polly to take care of him—independent Polly, as I call her sometimes. Why, we're all proud, after all; only that poor woman is more demonstrative over it, having more money to show off with. I'm a nice fellow to preach, to be sure. And supposing some of

us went down, and some of us were saved," added this man, who was a deep thinker, certainly, and made good the lady's late opinion of him, "what strange events might follow, according to God's will. I don't know whose lives the rich woman's dying would affect—not mine, not any one's in whom I have an interest"—he was wrong there—"but if I were to sink, and Christie to swim, what would follow then, I wonder? What a strange turn to that child's story, and what a future, a wreck of a future, empty, incomplete, and leaving her in a world of temptation! No, I won't think any more about that—better she and I floated away together out of the world, than she alone in it. Better—why, Martin, Martin," he said, in self-reproof, "you're giving yourself the horrors, my man; and you've a task before you that should set you a better example. Well, the girl isn't here, to be frightened at me—that's well."

He concluded his soliloquy, and took advantage of a lull in the storm to count his money, which he carried loose in his trousers pockets—notes, gold, silver, and copper *en masse*. There were only three notes easily counted, and speedily put back out of the draught; but the other coin required care in enumeration, and he set about his task with great gravity, with his arms round the rope to which he still clung.

Martin Wynn finished his task with the worst of the weather. The wind abated as suddenly as it had risen; the clouds seemed inclined to lessen in density, and let a glimmer of sunshine through—only inclined, though, for the rest of the voyage.

The first person to appear on deck was William, the page, who had been missed earlier in this chapter, and whose allotted task had been to run on errands for his mistress, and look after innumerable boxes. The boxes covered with tarpaulin, and the mistress surrounded by feminine satellites, William had seen no just cause and impediment to smoking cigars and drinking pale ale in the second cabin; but the cigars having disagreed with him, and the pale ale turned to acetic acid, William had come gasping to the deck red-eyed and white, but preserving an idiotic smile as evidence of being game to the last.

There had been a few words exchanged between William and Martin Wynn before starting for Folkestone, and William advanced at once toward his late companion.

"Been on deck all time?" he said thickly.

"Yes."

"Been queer?"

"No. You have."

"Rather—a fellow always gets bad cigars on these boats—beastly things, enough to upset any body. Old girl floored, I suppose?"

"Your mistress, do you mean?" said Martin, severely.

"Yes—of course I mean her."

"If I were in her service, I would speak more respectfully of her. When I couldn't do that, I would cut off all those buttons, and then—cut off myself."

Martin Wynn seemed to suit his conversation to his customers, and therefore it had its weight accordingly.

"Ah! yes," said the page, looking distrustfully at Martin, "so I shall, pretty quick—I've had quite enough of *her*, you may be sure. I never knew such a woman—full of whims and fancies, as fond of life as a gal, and as fond of herself as twenty gals, and as proud of herself as fifteen hundred. Do you think I shall stop any longer than I can help?—oh! no, not exactly!"

"You are going, then?"

"Yes, I are."

"Ah! you'll be a loss to the establishment, I dare say," said Martin; "what is your mistress's name?"

"Henwood."

"Eh?"

"Henwood. She married old Henwood, the great ware-houseman—lots of money—no love on her side—precious little on his after a year of it. I hear that he was very glad to die."

"Henwood—Henwood of Upper Ground Street? Well, that's singular!"

He did not say what was singular, although the page asked him; he went away on his own train of thought, and the page did not trouble him much with his society, the swimmings coming on again from those wretched cigars they sell on board ship!

They were nearing Folkestone very rapidly—they could see the visitors on the pier looking out for them; it was like home, that run of broken, picturesque cliff, with the town lying in the hollow, and stealing up the slopes, after the en-

croaching fashion common to towns that are getting on in the world.

The passengers came on deck; even lady-passengers were glad to brave the elements once more—among them Mrs. Henwood, supported by the whole strength of her staff, minus the governess, still on her back in the cabin. Lettice Henwood and Christie Wynn came up together, the difference in their complexions not so apparent as when they left Boulogne that morning.

Mrs. Henwood beckoned Martin Wynn to her side the moment she caught sight of him. She had disencumbered herself of her wrappers, and was standing between two green-faced domestics, with her hat on one side, and her curls somewhat rakishly disposed.

"They *will* get together, those two!" she said, peevishly; "and I have asked you to keep them apart—you know I have!"

Martin almost frowned at this; then the absurd nervousness of Mrs. Henwood elicited from him, the instant afterward, his customary hearty laugh.

"There's not much time for your daughter to imbibe low notions from mine, or mine high notions from yours," he said; "and they'll never meet again."

"No—that is not likely."

Each accepted that fact as positive, and was consoled thereby, for each could not see any chances or changes of life that could set them face to face, although each had known much of life's uncertainty, and noted many changes. Martin Wynn had a faint idea that Mrs. Henwood would have thanked him for past services before they parted, but after this new exhibition of her contempt for him and his, he did not look for it; and he did not think more highly of his fashionable acquaintance. Once the thought crossed him that it would not be a bad opportunity to remind her of an old man still in her service, who was almost too old for work, and worthy of a pension; and then he checked it with as much pride as had been exhibited in Mrs. Henwood, only it was a pride of a better quality, and would wear longer, and look more graceful at all times than hers.

He drew his daughter by the hand away from the Henwoods, and gave a shrug to his shoulders—a French shrug, that he had acquired in Paris—as though he shook them

from his thoughts from that day ; and thus the woman of five-and-thirty, with the girlish manners, and the man of the same age, to whose manners she had objected, entered an English port, dreaming not of the after-parts they had to play together.

CHAPTER VIII.

A BUSY SUNDAY.

MR. CHARLES WYNN, watchman, was on Sunday duty, as usual, at Henwood's Wharf, Upper Ground Street. Polly had brought him his breakfast, according to invariable rule, kissed his Punch-like countenance, asked if he were well, hoped that it would be a fine day, and that he would be ready for a hearty dinner at one o'clock, and then tripped back to breakfast with her protégé. Mr. Wynn, having drunk his coffee, and eaten his bread and butter, sharing a portion of the latter refreshment with Speck, the terrier, proceeded to look round the wharf, to walk from one extremity to another of the great yard, steering his way through casks, and bales, and hampers, till he reached the inner dock, now full of water, that had come in with the tide.

A more monotonous employment than Mr. Wynn's—a more uncomfortable vocation—could not have been found in all London ; it was well that Mr. Wynn had lost a considerable amount of life's energy, and had always been a patient man. Like his daughter Polly, he made the best of every thing ; he took things with composure, and was proud to be of service still, earning his own living in that peculiar state of life to which he had been called.

There were many of the clerks and warehousemen who pitied old Wynn in their hearts—a few who condescended to pity him to his face, and got snubbed for their pains. Every one knew his story—what an old servant he had been to the family, honest and faithful for fifty years, at least, and rewarded niggardly for past services by a night-watchman's place. Every one thought it hard except Charles Wynn. He was proud to be of use still, and above all charity—there was a great satisfaction in being of help to the last to the Henwoods ! He had helped his mistress's father ;

and when that father died, and his mistress had married her father's partner, also a Henwood — a cousin of her father's, and thirty years her senior—Charles Wynn still remained a servant to the Henwoods, until the family went abroad; after that he became a watchman in Upper Ground Street, working for the old name till the last.

The Henwoods had been a family without fine feelings; there was no sentiment in their midst; there had not been any, save with one exception, and then sentiment had turned out very badly, and taken one of two daughters from home. Mr. and Mrs. Henwood had been practical people to the days of their death—living well, and paying well, requiring money's worth for their money, and a fair amount of respect from those on whom their money was spent. Their servants remained with them many years, but no affection was ever felt by the employers for them; their wages canceled all obligations, and old servants could always give warning, and take their departure, without being missed much. Wynn had grown attached to the Henwoods, but not the Henwoods to him; he would have given up all his wages to remain with the old house; the Henwoods would have exchanged him for a better man, if it had been possible to find one as trustworthy for a shilling a week less wages. When the old people had left their riches behind them, cutting off the fugitive daughter from all share of the patrimony, Wynn remained in service until the heiress's marriage to another Henwood, who was as wooden and impervious as the rest of them. When that Henwood died, and the young widow talked of going abroad, and breaking up her establishment, leaving the wharfinger's business to her managing man, Wynn had reminded her, for the first time in his life, of the long term of years in which he had been of service to her family. He was getting old; he had had a boy and girl to bring up—the boy to start in the world — and he had not saved much money; he would not care to be thrown out of employment, or left upon the parish in due course.

"Find him a place somewhere," Mrs. Henwood had said to her managing man before departure for the Continent. "How tiresome these old servants are. As if they hadn't been paid well for all that they have done!"

So the managing man, puzzled what to do with Mr.

Wynn, constituted him watchman of the wharf in Upper Ground Street, and thought little more of him from that day. Mr. Wynn's wages were paid out of the "petty cash," the name of an old servant was confined to subordinates, and there was no one to estimate him at his true worth, or thank him for his interest in the welfare of the place still. Mr. Wynn had still an idea that his services were duly appreciated, and his memory kept green. He had had always a sense of his own importance—hence the cognomen of Consequential Charles, that had been bestowed upon him in his best days.

That Sunday morning there was a burlesque of importance in his manner, more apparent in the bright sunshine, than in the darkness of night-duty. He was very proud of his responsibility, of thousands and thousands of pounds' worth of "stuff," as he called it—and as he had heard his employers call it—being left in trust to him till Monday morning came, and the office on the right was full of clerks again. No one could tap casks of *their* tallow, *their* oil, *their* turpentine, *their* American flour, while he was watchful; and though the keys of the great warehouse, and of the counting-house, where the iron safe was kept, were in other hands, no noise in those offices could escape unnoticed the quick ears of him or Speck. He was proud of his duty, and if he strutted a little over it, and felt it to be a more important task than other people did, that made his post less heavy and less monotonous.

No one in the world, with the exception of Speck, perhaps, knew how thoroughly well old Wynn performed his duty. The old man would have considered it a sin to sleep during the long nights, while he was paid to be awake and watchful; he was ready for any emergency, and though incidents were few and far between, still he was prepared for them, and it was not in nature to take him unawares.

He had been his rounds that Sunday morning before breakfast; he went again after breakfast, with his hands behind him, and his stick trailing in the rear, and Speck, in good spirits with the weather, jumping and nibbling at the stick. He was very methodical, and took fresh stock of the casks—as though one might have been made off with during his meal—and he referred to his register in chalk on the side of the last cask, to make sure that all was correct, and

satisfactory. He knew what was in hand on that landing-place better than any one else in the Henwood service, for the clerks would have had to refer to sundry brown books with red backs, and he could have told them at once. Mr. Wynn walked to the warehouse door and listened for the noises that never came, although he had listened for ten years now; he walked under the archway above the dock to the river frontage of Henwood's Wharf, and stood looking at the barges moored there, and waiting for the following day; he looked at the river glistening in the sun, at the Temple Gardens across the way to the left, at the mass of warehouse building, timber-yards, founderies, breweries, and furnace shafts, all mirrored in the Thames that bright Sunday in February.

"It's a sweetly pretty place," commented the old man, walking back to his more proper sphere of action; "we couldn't have had a finer spot for business or scenery. When the bells come out, we'll go to church, Speck, and pray for all good friends."

The bells came out in due course, and Mr. Wynn and Speck walked soberly to their devotions—to a huge stone in one corner of the archway, placed as a protection to the brickwork from the wagon-wheels rolling in and out all day when business was brisk. Mr. Wynn placed a sack upon this stone, and then sat down thereon, waiting for the bells to cease, arranging a pair of spectacles meanwhile upon his nose, and disinterring from his pocket a well-worn prayer-book of somewhat large proportions, and a Bible, more thumbed and worn than its companion.

When the bells had ceased ringing, Mr. Wynn began his devotions, reading slowly to himself, and following closely the church service, and the lessons for the day. As he read very carefully, and spelled in schoolboy fashion a great many of the words, he was not at the end of his task till close upon one o'clock. Until one boomed forth from St. Paul's he retained his seat there, notwithstanding that he was cold, and had no sermon to deliver. Speck, used to this routine, woke up as the old man pocketed his books and cocked up two ears vigilantly. He had been asleep all the service, like many of his betters.

One o'clock struck, and Wynn delivered his last prayer.

"God bless us all!" said the simple-minded man, "and

make us all fond of one another! God bless my Polly, and keep her just as good as she is now; and Martin, bringing him safe home from furrin parts, and little Christie, and young Zach, who's turning for the better, and Mrs. Henwood, and Mr. Tinchester, and all connected with the business. Amen."

After which general blessing, Mr. Wynn rose, straightened his back as much as possible, and, with great difficulty, walking round the yard to count his casks again, and make sure that no one was under the tarpaulins along with the bales. That task done, he took another survey of the water, shook his head at a penny boat that was passing at the time, as though he entered a protest against Sunday traveling—he and Speck together, the latter barking vociferously—then he returned to the wharf, and looked at his great silver watch meanwhile.

"Twenty past one—and here's Zach with the dinner. What a punctual boy that is!"

The gate-bell clanged unmelodiously, as Mr. Wynn reached the outer archway—the great archway, under which Zach's mother had died. Mr. Wynn opened the gate, and Zach Fernwell, spruced up for Sunday, leaped through with Mr. Wynn's dinner on a tray.

"We haven't kept you a-waiting, dad, I hope?"

"No, boy," said Mr. Wynn; "and what have you been doing to-day? Church, Zach?"

"Yes."

"With Polly?"

"Yes, of course."

"You like it better than you did?"

"I'm not so skeered at it—I don't make it out yet, quite. I like to go with Polly better than minding house."

"That's right. And you're going to school to-morrow—evening-school, you know."

"Yes," said Zach; "and if they make a clever cove of me, I shall get on, and drop into a better berth, Polly says, and earn more money. If the money on'y came in a little faster, dad—that's the worst of it!"

"What do you want more money for?"

"Oh! nobody gets on without money—and your dinner's getting cold, and Polly's waiting for me. I've been a-thinking of minding this here place on Sunday arternoons,

and giving you a rest at home, or a walk out with Polly. May I?"

"I never allow substitutes—I should be ashamed to do my work by deppity, Zach."

"What's deppity, dad?"

"When you've been to evening-school, you'll know the English language better, Zach," said Mr. Wynn; "now go home and get your dinner."

Zach departed, and Mr. Wynn seated himself once more on the stone in the corner, and proceeded to do justice to his Sunday's meal. Dinner over, he walked about the wharf again; counted his casks by fifties, referred to his last entry in chalk, took one more look at the river, and shook his stick as well as his head at the next penny boat. Then the gate-bell clanged again, and Mr. Wynn paused to consider that unusual incident.

Speck had paused also, and given vent to a low whine, in lieu of entering his usual protest against visitors.

"Why, it's friends," said the old man, looking at Speck; "how's that, now?"

Mr. Wynn shamled his way to the gates, and opened the wicket therein, the instant afterward starting back with surprise at the apparition beyond.

A fair-haired, blue-eyed girl darted through and clasped her arms about his waist.

"My dear old grandad—I would come here first to see you and Speck, and tell you all the news."

"That's well. That's kind of you, my Christie," and the watchman stooped and kissed her, before closing the gates upon the outer world.

"I have so much to tell you," ran on Christie; "what foreign places are like, what wonders we have seen, and how I teased father after chapel to come on here this afternoon."

"Ah! he wasn't in a hurry to come and see *me*, then," said Mr. Wynn, ruefully.

"It was Sunday, you know, and on Sundays father goes regularly to chapel. But this afternoon I did try very hard to bring him across the water."

"I hope it was right," said Mr. Wynn, doubtfully; "he would not have come for any one else, I know. Where *is* the boy?"

"Talking to Aunt Polly—when I go across the road, father will come here. He wants a little talk with you about—"

"About giving up this place," concluded the watchman. "Yes, I know. Every year he's good enough to offer me a share in his home; God bless him, he has not been a man to grow ashamed of the old father, or to think him a trouble to him! I like such sons as that," Mr. Wynn added, with a chuckle, as though he possessed several sons of a different quality, somewhere or other.

"And you'll alter your mind this year, grandfather?"

"And give up taking care of business, and that independence I'm so proud of too. Why, is it likely?"

"You would see so much more of me," said Christie, gravely, and evidently duly appreciating that advantage herself; "we might all have one house—father thinks so."

"Father may mar—father may grow tired of my old-fashioned style, my gal," corrected Mr. Wynn; "he's very proud in his way, my dear, and I could not throw up my berth for any money. I really don't believe that they would like to part with me here!"

"I think—"

"And I think," said the old man, shrewdly, "that your father has sent you over to pave the ground aforehand, and try how sich cooing as yours will answer first. But it's impossible, Christie, so tell me about the furrin parts, and what your father has been doing all this time abroad?"

"Oh! all the clever things that no one else can do," said Christie, earnestly, "like a dear clever father as he is! I often think I'm not proud enough of him—that I ought to do more for him."

"You're a nice old-fashioned baby to talk like that!" said Mr. Wynn, "I must say."

"Oh! don't say that I am old-fashioned," entreated Christie, with a piteous comicality of expression; "for he wishes to keep me always young, and like a child. And yet I'm twelve, and almost a woman, you see—which is very hard."

"Ah! it *is* hard!" commented Mr. Wynn.

"And with the big house to take care of—and the house-keeping to see to—and father, always so forgetful of his 'dinners and teas—and then the schooling in the evening—

it's hard to keep as young as I wish. That's one reason why father wants you and Aunt Polly to live with us—aunt to be housekeeper, and I to have nothing to manage but—myself."

"And will that be hard?" was the dry question put in here.

"I don't know—I never think of myself," answered Christie, innocently. "I have so much to do; father and I are always very busy. Why, if you and aunt were with us, aunt might keep house while we were traveling."

"And what should I watch?"

"The cabinet, to be sure—the great cabinet that will never be finished," said Christie, with a sigh. "You could take care that it did not come to harm while we were away."

"I can't see why you go, myself, on these outlandish journeys," said Mr. Wynn, as she stooped and took Speck up in her arms, as a reward of merit for his long patience under non-observance.

"He don't like to part with me—and I keep him happy, just as he always keeps me. Oh!" with a grave shake of her head, "he wants more watching than you fancy. I sometimes think," she added with a little shudder, "that he would get into trouble without me to mind him!"

Yes, a trifle old-fashioned for her years, it was evident—and it was natural. The sole companion of Martin Wynn, daughter, friend, and housekeeper, she had aged a little; not too much, perhaps, not in any degree to her prejudice; for there was no oldness of thought in her face, and the innocence of a child was at her heart still. But she was a girl who had stepped into a lost mother's place, and had been quick to see the necessity of doing her best to cheer her father. She had seen that four years ago, with a quickness far beyond her years, and Martin Wynn had been slowly and gradually brought back to his old good-tempered, natural self.

Christie changed the conversation, and the watchman and his grandchild spent a pleasant half-hour together; Christie very full of gossip, and the old man all attention. Time reminded the former at last that her father desired to get back to chapel that evening—the younger Wynns were strict dissenters, it was evident—and as Martin wished to see his

father, and offer the old inducements for his father to retire from business, Christie thought it necessary to bid the old man farewell.

Adieux were exchanged accordingly, and Christie stepped into the street, the old man looking fondly after her.

"There never was such a gal as that!" he murmured, "Polly excepted, only Polly's younger in her ways somehow—which is funny like. She'll grow a big gal—she'll grow a pretty one—and I s'pose there's no doubt of her growing gooder and gooder, for it's in the family."

And with this self-laudatory peroration, Mr. Wynn shut himself in Henwood's Wharf once more, and was walking toward the great yard when the bell rang again.

"This is an uncommon busy afternoon for Sunday," said the watchman. "I suppose it's Christie back, for Martin could not have got over yet."

CHAPTER IX.

MR. WYNN CONTINUES BUSINESS.

MR. WYNN opened the gate of Henwood's Wharf, and a man, a stranger to him, glided in suddenly, and stood on business ground before him. Mr. Wynn was somewhat vexed at being taken off his guard; had he not anticipated the return of Christie, he would have adopted his usual habit of dropping the trap in the gate, and looking through at the outsider. Mr. Wynn's equanimity was capable of being ruffled, if his dignity were outraged.

"That's not a proper way of coming in here, whoever you are," said Mr. Wynn. "May I ask your business, or what's the matter?"

The person addressed was a man of middle height, who would have looked taller had he not given away in the chest at an anterior period. A man whose head craned forward, and hung over himself, as it were. A man very thin and angular, and but indifferently attired, wearing a shabby suit of black, his outer garment a dress coat, buttoned to the chin, and his throat enveloped in many folds of a dirty white woolen comforter. Mr. Wynn, however, was most interested in the face of the intruder, and paid but little heed to

the habiliments. It was a face very white and lined, rendered somewhat repulsive by two shaggy gray eyebrows, which hung at an unnatural length over his eyes, and had an unpleasant habit of rising and falling while he spoke. It was one of those faces that lose their bloom, and contract early in life, making old men of their wearers; this had been, once upon a time, a handsome face, but was thin, hard, and dirty now, with no particular expression worth noting at that period. Add to this that he wore a ratty gray tuft trained to a point underneath his chin, and the reader may imagine that it was not an attractive countenance looming at Mr. Wynn in the shadow of the archway.

"I beg your pardon, sir," was the suave reply, however, to Mr. Wynn's question. "I never transact business of a Sunday—it is against my principles."

"Glad to hear it," said Mr. Wynn. "What's the matter, then?"

"I have called to ask for the favor of Mrs. Henwood's address. I have a visit of congratulation to pay that lady upon her safe return from a long voyage. I am a dear and respected friend of hers."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Wynn, doubtfully.

"This is Henwood's Wharf, I presume?" he said, skipping rapidly from beneath the archway into the open yard, and looking round him very attentively; "a fine business site, *sans doute*, and the money rolls in here as the Thames rolls into that dock—regularly, swiftly, and deeply. Such, sir, is the commercial world, or the lives, rather of the lucky ones within it. I am of the commerce that found its decadence early."

"Mrs. Henwood bought a villa at Wimbledon two years ago—or Mr. Tinchester, that's our manager, did for her. If she's at home yet, there you'll find her, sir."

"Thank you. You are watchman here?"

"Ay."

"Only you now?"

"Only me and my dog Speck."

"An onerous task at your age—Mrs. Henwood might have found one more suitable. Surely, now, you are not the Mr. Wynn of whom I have heard so much?"

"Wynn is my name. Do you mind stepping out of the premises? It's a rule of mine to allow no strangers here while I'm on duty."

"An excellent rule," said the man, proceeding to retire with an airy step, and a look of unconcern, "honored in the observance too—Mrs. Henwood should be proud of her faithful servitor. And your name is Wynn, then? You are the Caleb Balderstone of Upper Ground Street?"

"I don't know what you are talking about?" said Mr. Wynn, shaking his head deprecatingly. He was at the gate now, holding it wide open for the stranger to pass through—keeping his eyes fixed upon him also with an intentness that might have dismayed men less at their ease.

"I am glad to have met with Mr. Wynn."

"Thankee," said Wynn. "Will you leave your card, sir?"

"It's of no consequence—I shall see Mrs. Henwood to-day, sir."

"I've a capital memory for faces," mused Mr. Wynn, aloud, "and I'm a-trying to remember where I've seen yours afore."

The intruder gave a perceptible start at this, and then arranged his comforter round his throat with both hands, clad in huge brown cotton mittens.

"We have never had the pleasure of meeting before, Mr. Wynn," he said, "unless you have ever resided in Manchester, where this humble life has been entirely spent. Good-afternoon."

"Good-afternoon."

The old man watched him out of sight, as he had watched his grandchild; could he have seen the sudden change of countenance, a change as complete as though the man had removed a mask, he would have known him more readily, although many years had passed since their last meeting. He did not hear the oath escape the lips of this hitherto suave individual, as muttering his anathema on the old man's memory, he went on rapidly toward Blackfriars.

Mr. Wynn, troubled in thought, closed the gate once more—once more proceeded to go his rounds before Martin came to see him. Once again, to balk him, clanged the warehouse bell.

"This *must* be the boy!" said Mr. Wynn; "but how that bell is going it to-day, just like a work-day bell, for the matter of that. P'r'aps it's that scampish-looking fellow with the comforter come back."

Full of this thought he lowered the trap on the present occasion, and peered through. To his astonishment there was a yellow-bodied carriage in the roadway, a powdered coachman on the box and a powdered footman at the gate, looking down with disgust at his stockings, which had got splashed by the mud—silken-clad calves, shot with black currants.

"What is it?" asked Mr. Wynn.

"Mrs. Henwood wishes to speak to you, my good man," said the footman, patronizingly.

"Mrs.—Mrs. Henwood!" gasped Mr. Wynn. "Is she back again? is she here?"

"Of course she's here."

Mr. Wynn was bewildered by the advent of his old mistress in Upper Ground Street. It was incomprehensible—it was an event in his life. Mrs. Henwood in England—calling to see him, of all people in the world, and on a Sunday, of all days in the week! What did it mean?

He opened the gate at the same instant as the carriage window was lowered, and the head of his mistress appeared—sharp, proud, and repellent enough in the wintry grayness of that day.

"Watchman!" she called.

Though it was his mistress's command, Mr. Wynn hesitated to obey her. It was leaving the wharf unprotected—some one might slip in while he was engaged—in all his life he had never left the place before.

"What are you stopping about?" she asked. "I wish to speak to you."

Mr. Wynn advanced, cautioning the footman to keep a watch on the place till he returned.

At the carriage door he took off his hat and bowed his head reverently before his mistress.

"I am glad to welcome you back again to England," he said, with a voice that even shook a little with emotion. "I am honored very much by this visit to an old servant of the house."

Mrs. Henwood tossed her head scornfully at this; but the old man had not completed his bow, and did not note the manner in which his homage was received.

"Your name is Wynn?"

"Why—of course—it must be."

"I don't remember you."

"Good gracious, madam, don't remember me! Not old Charles Wynn, who in your father's time was—"

"Ah! yes—in my father's time—some one of the name of Wynn, I have no doubt. My memory is pretty retentive, even for small matters. You are the watchman here?"

"To be sure I am," said Wynn.

He stood on the curb-stone, somewhat crest-fallen at his reception. The idea had seized him that his honored mistress had driven from Wimbledon on purpose to thank him for his long and arduous services, and it was a blow to think how closely he had verged upon oblivion.

"Two months ago a something very unpleasant happened here, and found its way into the papers," said Mrs. Henwood, with great rapidity of utterance. "I wrote to Mr. Tinchester for full particulars, and obtained them. I even believe one paper commented upon the relationship between me and—that woman. That was surely enough to excite me, without any interference afterward from you."

"From me!" said Mr. Wynn. "I don't see how I—"

"Or your daughter. Don't interrupt me, please, that is a liberty I never put up with. I am not used to comments upon my assertions—I object to them strongly."

Mrs. Henwood gave greater force to her suggestions by a vigorous toss to her side curls.

"But—"

"But there you go again," she said; "really I never met with a man more abrupt. Your daughter wrote to me in Paris—found out my address, and took the liberty of sending me a cramped, ill-spelled, almost illegible epistle, which I was expected to decipher. You must have prompted her."

"Polly said something about it to me," said Mr. Wynn; "but I thought it was all to be left till you got back, ma'am."

"And when I return there is a second letter—another of those things," she added, with inexpressible disgust, "hoping that if the other had not miscarried, I would pardon the liberty of a recapitulation of the case. This is the meaning of the missive—not the contents, oh! no."

Mrs. Henwood was angry. She spoke in little angry jerks, jerking her head also with every word. At a distance, to the eyes of the footman standing at the gates of

the wharf, it seemed as if Mrs. Henwood were pecking at the scrubby gray hair of Mr. Charles Wynn.

"I'm very sorry," said Mr. Wynn, apologetically.

"I do not say that it was not a very shocking case," she continued, "or a distressing case to happen here. I was shocked dreadfully. Just what every one might have expected—for *she* was the most ungovernable woman whom I have ever met—but it was her own fault completely. I had nothing to do with her goings on!"

"Poor woman!" muttered Wynn, twirling his hat in his hand still, and feeling the draught very much through the open gate behind him.

"I'm not aware that it is any business of yours to pity her—or whether any just and thoughtful being be entitled to pity her at all. Her own fault—many and many a time I warned her of the folly of the conduct she was pursuing. I can not be responsible for her life or death, or be troubled by people trying to make me responsible by suggesting fifty foolish schemes. I have nothing to do with her child—I do not intend to have any thing to do with it, and therefore I have driven over here to put a stop to that idea at once."

"I will tell Polly so—I thought that she built a little too much upon it. She's a girl who looks too much upon the bright side of every thing."

"She is a fool, then!" said Mrs. Henwood, beginning to peck at Mr. Wynn again.

"Ah! there you are mistaken," replied the old man, quickly, almost indignantly.

"I shall judge for myself—I have come to see her, trouble as it is, and no one has a right to expose me to this dreadful inconvenience. I was at the point of death yesterday in a steam-boat, crossing the wide ocean, and ought to have been allowed a little rest and peace of mind to-day!"

"I hope that Polly did not ask you to call upon her—on a Sunday, too, ma'am?"

"Call upon *your* daughter! Ask *me* to call!" almost shrieked Mrs. Henwood. "She knows better manners than that, unless you have brought her up a heathen."

"Which I haven't—quite."

"I call of my own free will, to put a stop to all attempts to extort money from me at once," she said; "to show that

I am not the woman to be hoodwinked by a specious story of that woman's child. The child is no relation of mine, that I can see—that I acknowledge."

"Very well, ma'am. I hope he'll work his way without any body's help—it will make him the prouder and the better man. If it's harder work for him—I won't say for us—so much the better too!"

"So much the better!" repeated Mrs. Henwood; "but it's an aggravating affair to me, however it turns out. People will talk in this country—and tell falsehoods, and magnify things. You had no right to get that boy a place on *my* wharf—it was a liberty—it must be altered."

"Oh! no—I hope not, for Zach's sake," said the watchman; "they don't know any thing about it. It's only me and Mr. Tinchester that has the least idea."

"And that daughter of yours—and the boy himself—and—"

"No, the boy does not know yet."

"Well, it will not be long first—and I object very much to all the fuss that has been made. Now, which is your daughter's house?"

"Over the way, ma'am. Where the brown shutters are."

"Is there—is there any thing *catching* in this neighborhood?" she asked.

"Catching!—catching what?" asked Mr. Wynn, absently.

"Nothing infectious about this street?—or in your house?"

"Lor' bless you, no, ma'am!"

"That is why I called here first," she said. "I can meet effrontery or ignorance better than fever or small-pox. Oh! good heaven, nothing like small-pox about, I trust?"

"Nothing, Mrs. Henwood."

"Show the coachman where to drive, then," said Mrs. Henwood, so suddenly drawing up the window as to shave the profile of her oldest servant.

Mr. Wynn gave the necessary directions, the footman quitted the gates for his post behind the carriage, the watchman returned to duty on the wharf, and Mrs. Henwood was driven to the residence of Polly Wynn.

"This has been an uncommon busy Sunday, Speck," Mr.

Wynn remarked to his terrier, "hardly time to look about the wharf, and no time at all for proper thoughts. All sorts of thoughts turning up instead, just as if it was the middle of the week. So *she's* back again — if she hadn't been put out about poor Zach, I dare say she would have been very glad to see me. Bless her heart, how well she looks! And, bless my heart, here I go again, thinking of any thing, as if it didn't matter a button. Now, let us sober down, and knock off a prayer or two for little Zach in danger — wus than ever. Let — why, confound that bell, it's at it again, as I'm a living sinner!"

Mr. Wynn and Speck once more proceeded toward the gates, Mr. Wynn remembering, in his progress, who was likely to be the visitor on this occasion.

"Martin it is, no doubt — Martin, who might have done good by keeping where he was — I being out of the way."

He opened the gate, and Martin stepped through quickly, and laid a hand on each of his father's shoulders.

"Well, old gentleman — oldest and best friend — hard worker and slave — I give up my Sunday rules for your blessing."

"God bless you, Martin," ejaculated the old man at once.

"So Christie has no greater power than I to induce you to give up this place?"

"My independence, Martin!"

"I shall never feel that I am getting on in the world with you at this wharf. The world says already that I turn my back on the father."

"The father knows there is not such another son in it," was the quick reply.

"Such another ruffian and unfilial bully, eh?" said Martin, "well failing with you; I must ask Mrs. Henwood to discharge you."

"Mrs. Henwood! — oh! have you seen her?"

"Seen Mrs. Henwood — yes, yesterday."

"Yesterday — good gracious! But to-day?"

"Well, I was not so struck yesterday with her virtues and graces, as to hurry off to-day in search of a second edition of them," said Martin, dryly.

"She has been here. She has gone across to Polly."

"About — the boy?" asked Martin, a man quick to leap toward the truth.

"Yes—she objects to our lodger. She was very angry."

"Poor thing!" mused Martin, "she is easily put out."

"I fancy that if—if you would only run across and talk to her yourself—very humbly, mind, and with not quite so much bounce about you—"

"Eh! what do you mean by that?" said Martin, with his brown eyes becoming very large and round.

Mr. Wynn senior hastened to apologize.

"You have a little habit, you know, of speaking out all that you think."

"Why shouldn't I?" he interrupted again.

"Oh! it's a good habit—I don't mind it a bit—but other people might, if they're big guns. And there is a way of saying the same things *genteelly*, you know—why, it's a way I have got myself."

"I think you have got into a mess with this small lodger of yours," said Martin; "burdened yourself and Polly with a human being you don't understand."

"And you blame us—you of all men, who try to do good, and are glad when good comes of your work."

"No, I don't blame you," said Martin, after a moment's reflection; "though Polly is too easy a woman, and you too easy a man to make converts. That lad you have in possession is as cunning as a fox."

"What—what makes you think so?"

"I see it in his face—in those sharp black eyes of his."

"Oh! you should have seen him two months ago, Martin. And as for Polly being easy," he added, reverting suddenly to his son's previous criticism, "she's the very best of little women, and knows what's best, as sure as you do."

"The very best of little women looking always to the bright side, and seeing comfort to be extracted from all things, let their shadows be never so heavy on us—do you think that I have forgotten when Christie's mother died?"

"But—"

"But Polly is not the best guide for this boy—that's my opinion still!"

Mr. Wynn, senior, was thoughtful after this; he would have liked to take that opportunity of defending himself from the charge of "easiness," and even of gently insinuating that he had known times when Martin was easy also, proud as he might be of his firmness now. But time was

precious, and here was a valuable aid-de-camp idling away moments that might affect all Zach's after life.

"Look here, Martin," he said suddenly, "I think it wants you somehow in this case of Zach's. He's a boy trying to turn good—that's every thing, you know—but he's a boy that wants help to keep him straight. He was my young mistress's child, and—"

"I have heard the story from Polly."

"Ah! that's all right," said Mr. Wynn; "well, Polly ain't the one to take his part with Mrs. Henwood. She's a nervous gal, and will give in to her, or not be able to speak up for him—just because Mrs. Henwood's from a different spear. Why, even I feel small, but you—"

"But me and my bounce," laughed his son, who was evidently proud of his "bounce," and had, therefore, human foibles like other people, "may get over this fine lady. Well, I never was afraid of any one, or of speaking up for any body; and Mrs. Henwood and I perfectly understand each other. I don't like interfering in the matter—because you might have written to me, and taken my advice earlier, and so on," he added, half aggrieved at the parental disobedience; "but it's a good fight to share in, and here goes to support the Wynn standard. I sha'n't lose my temper—though she will."

"Don't be aggravating, Martin—for you can be very aggravating when you like, too."

"I'll be as gentle as I can; though she's a lady for whom a few home truths might be good. I'm going now."

"I wish you luck, my son," said the sire, gravely.

"Luck for the small lodger, for whose reformation we shall all have to work hard," said Martin.

"A good work that—I've patience."

"True," said Martin, buttoning his coat to the chin; "and now for Mrs. Henwood. Ugh!" he added, with a little shudder, "but she's a tough morsel!"

CHAPTER X.

"THE OLD PLAYFELLOW."

ALTHOUGH Martin Wynn always acted his part courageously, still there were times, only known to himself, when he required a certain amount of preparation. One of these times had occurred, and he paused more than once in his progress through the street, and even up the stairs to his sister's apartments, in order to hold converse with himself, and gather strength for the good fight to which he had alluded.

Naturally he was not a nervous or a bashful man; he was a man fond of the truth, as well as a man vain of his inflexibility, and it annoyed him to think that any feeling of embarrassment should confront him on this particular occasion. It even made him indulge in one or two good-tempered laughs to himself—it seemed so good a joke that he should feel any difficulty in addressing Mrs. Henwood!

However, he took a long breath outside the door, muttered "Here goes," and entered the room, honored by the rare presence of a lady of fashion. It was a quaint scene upon which he had intruded, which he stood surveying, with his back to the door and his face to the firelight. Polly Wynn was standing before her visitor in much the same manner as a child doubtful of results might stand before an implacable governess—she was looking crest-fallen enough, nervously fidgeting at the corners of her apron with those agile fingers that worked so busily and rapidly on week-days, and glancing timidly now and then toward the lady enthroned in her father's easy-chair, and scornfully regardless of every thing around her.

By the window looking with a fixed intensity into Upper Ground Street, stood Zach, his hands in his pockets, his back to present company. Watching him at a little distance, and yet not forgetting her aunt Polly or the stately lady by the fireside, was Christie Wynn, self-possessed, if silent. She had long since recognized the lady in the wrappings on board the *Ariadne*, although that recognition had not been

mutual. The room was not very light now—the day was dying out, the firelight flickered spasmodically, and Mrs. Henwood took but little interest in common folk.

She had not glanced toward the door since the entrance of Martin Wynn—and more or less of these sorts of people was immaterial to her. Let her express her opinion and be gone, drawing her shawl more closely round her, lest there should be contagion risked by touching them. She was concluding her remarks on Polly Wynn's conduct when Martin entered, and Martin did not offer to interrupt her. He stood and listened patiently.

"You will be pleased to understand that I can do nothing for that boy," she said, sniffing at her gold-mounted vinaigrette almost between every word; "that he is no business of mine—that it really was no business of yours to write to me about him. I can not be answerable for the folly of relations; I can not be saddled with the results of an imprudent marriage—I have myself and family to care for. I have been naturally shocked—and there's an end of it. The boy has a father, you say a brother, let him go to them. I can't help—I will not help."

"Thinking that you would have liked to be of assistance was my motive for writing," said Polly in a faint voice; "of course I did not expect that you would object."

"You have said this before—it was a mistake. You should have had more consideration for my feelings and my station in life, than have dragged me hither to explain how distasteful all this has been to me. You know that I am a lady?"

"I am aware of it."

"Then why should I be interested in a wretched little child like that? No one can be interested. It is not likely—there's nothing pathetic or touching, or any thing of that kind about him. Send him away—and let him tell his wretched father that I am not foolish enough to be duped into the patronage of any child of his."

"We shall not send him away, madam," said Polly, betraying a little more firmness. "I may have done wrong in writing to you—taken a great liberty in so doing—I ask your pardon for that. But as for sending Zach away—why, I'm proud to think he's getting happier and happier every day here."

"He must go."

"I would rather that you would not say any thing more, Mrs. Henwood," said Polly; "for as my mind's made up, there's not much chance of altering it—I'm like the rest of us for that."

"But, my good woman, you *must* alter it," said Mrs. Henwood with high-bred astonishment. "I can not be inconvenienced by such whims as these. Do you understand what we are talking about, boy?" she called to Zach.

"I think so, mum."

"Do you know who I am?" she asked; "what relation your mother was to me?"

"No," said Zach, still without looking in her direction.

"Let him go away as soon as possible," she said to Polly in a whisper; "I'll make it worth your while."

Polly shook her head, and in shaking it became aware for the first time of Martin's presence there.

"Oh! I am very glad that Martin is here to speak for me!" she cried joyfully; "he's better able than I am—he can tell you better than the rest of us why we can't give up little Zach to the cruel streets again. Martin, you will speak?"

"I'm afraid that it's no use my speaking," he said, advancing, drawing a chair with him and dropping into it by the visitor's side. "Good-evening, Mrs. Henwood—the sea-voyage has not done you any harm, I see."

Mrs. Henwood leaped in her chair, dropped her vinaigrette in her lap, picked it up and began sniffing at it again with redoubled energy.

"What, you again!—why, how came you here?—and who are you?"

"My name is Martin Wynn, this lady's brother. Once upon a time your playfellow down in Warwickshire."

"Playfellow!—how dare you say such a thing!"

"Until we were taught better manners by your father, who very naturally saw the impropriety. It was his fault in the first place, for building our cottage too near the house—and yours in the second."

"Mine!"

"Why, yes. You were as old as myself, and ought to have known better. We were both thirteen years of age—and you and Miss Ellen used to meet Polly and me in the

meadows because it was very dull at the great house. Don't you remember?"

"I can not be expected to remember all the foolish things of my childhood," was the dignified response.

"Ah! but you must remember," said Martin doggedly. "You are not likely to forget the slap across the shoulders that you got one afternoon from your father, any more than I; the chase he made after me with a horsewhip, and how I doubled and hid under the haystack. Let me see—how many years is that ago?"

"It is not worth while dwelling upon the subject," said Mrs. Henwood hastily. "It is painful to me, and you have not shown any great degree of courtesy in alluding to it. You are a very discourteous man." And Mrs. Henwood, not showing any great degree of courtesy herself, set down her vinaigrette, and replaced it by a double eye-glass, through which she took stock of her interlocutor.

Martin bore the scrutiny well. He had warmed to his task now, and was prepared to speak up for Zach Fernwell. Self-possession, one of the lady's own weapons, on occasions when sea-sickness did not interfere with her deportment, was ready to his hand.

"Send the children away, Polly—let them take a walk up and down the street together; then come back here," said Martin.

Martin's orders were immediately obeyed—Zach and Christie, a strange couple to be hand in hand, went out together. Polly returned, but edged away from the conversation to the window. She had had quite enough of "the old playfellow" for one occasion.

"I don't recollect you at all," murmured Mrs. Henwood at last. "I have a bad memory, at times—it is a trouble which I endure with the rest of my cares."

"A bad memory may be a good thing sometimes," said Martin. "It would not hurt us to forget a few of our follies—or a few of the wrongs over which we may feel inclined to brood. Mine is a good memory."

"So I should imagine."

"I wonder I did not remember you at once on board the boat. After all, you have not altered a great deal."

"Don't you think so?" said Mrs. Henwood, with a warmth and alacrity very much in contrast to her past languid indif-

ference. "Is it possible that the child's features should not have wholly changed? And yet I have had so much to distress me—seen so much of the world, that I ought to have looked more old—to have been, as it were, wholly unrecognizable. How strange all this is!"

Mr. Martin Wynn held his peace. He was on the point of recounting the few facts by which he should have recognized her, but he doubted the policy just then; and as the whole matter was foreign to her presence there, he could afford to be silent, and leave a better impression lingering with the rich woman. She was interested in this new topic of conversation; and could have set Zach aside for good, and reverted even to the by-gones, for the sake of a compliment or two. It was a pitiable vanity; and Martin Wynn, the first to see it, was the last man on earth to foster it.

"Concerning the boy," said he, bluntly. "Shall we settle this question, Mrs. Henwood?"

"So far as I am concerned, it is settled," she said more sharply. "You are not conceited enough to think to alter me?"

"Yes, I am."

Mrs. Henwood pushed back her chair a little way in her astonishment.

"It is not possible. I am a woman of the world, and know the world—my place in it, and what is due from it to me. You could not have picked out a woman less likely to be impressed by any appeal to sentiment."

"That's rather lucky—for I am not sentimental myself."

Mrs. Henwood looked at her watch.

"I think that I have remained here quite long enough—I will stay here five more minutes, if you wish it. But I am very weary of this subject."

She lay back in the chair, and half closed her eyelids. It might have been to display her eyelashes, of which she had been vain from her girlhood—on the instant Martin Wynn remembered that weakness also, and repressed a smile. After all, sharp-featured as she was, there were signs still of a handsome woman—one who had been perhaps very handsome before the cheeks went in, and the lines came out far too thick and plentiful for five-and-thirty summers. It was a fretful-looking face now—but there was still grace in the ruin Time and her own bad temper had made.

"My time is precious, like your own," said Martin; "therefore I will be very brief. I have seen this boy for the first time to-day. I have heard his story from Polly."

"Oh! the story of this disgrace—*my* family's disgrace—will spread rapidly enough, I do not doubt."

"Well, I do not doubt that myself; stories get about in capital style—especially the stories we don't want every one to hear. Now make this a good story."

"Eh?"

"You say that you are a woman of the world—very well, then you value the world's opinion. You would not like it to point at you and say, 'There goes a woman who would not give her own sister's child a chance of saving himself from the devil!' But you would be pleased to hear that world's applause for saving him—as you have a right to save him, if you are a Christian."

"Talk to a woman of the world still—I am no Christian!"

"I hope that is not true."

"You are a pious man," she said, with bitter intensity—"a preacher perhaps?"

"I have preached," replied Martin, "in a hurry, to fill up a gap among our local ministers; but preaching is not to—to my taste."

"I should have thought it had been."

"Not that I like my present line of argument about the world," said Martin—"asking you, a woman, too, to think of the world, when I should have spoken of Him who made it. But you are a strange woman!"

"And you the strangest man whom I have ever met—what are you?"

"Does it matter at present?"

"Not at all," she said, taking up her smelling-salts; "go on."

"At least, then, give this boy your moral support," said Martin—"I do not think that we shall ask any greater favor. Let him be impressed with the conviction of his relations—his own mother's relations—being interested in his rise in life, and leave the rest to us."

"Are you aware that he has a father?—as bold, and bad a villain, as ever breathed? That he has a brother a thief on the streets?—that to become interested in one is to raise up all the rest?"

"Or to defend him from the rest, and give him strength to hold his own against them."

"Is it possible that you can speak like this in the cause of a boy you do not know?"

"It is very possible."

"A boy in whom you may be deceived—who may be like his father and his brother," said Mrs. Henwood—"who is sure to be."

"I have my sister's word that this boy has improved already—has shown an anxiety lately to be quit forever of his past life."

"It is true. Zach has altered very much," said Polly.

"I wish, my good woman, that you would not interfere," said Mrs. Henwood, coldly—"I am speaking to your brother."

"Oh! I beg your pardon, madam."

"Now look here," said Mrs. Henwood, taking up her vinaigrette again, and keeping time with it on the palm of her hand, "I do not wish to be talked about; my half-sister—not my own sister, as you pleased to term her—brought the name of Henwood unpleasantly before the world by running away with her music-master. That affair passed over—she dies a beggar at my warehouse gates, and gets me in the papers—I can't escape those dreadful papers, let me try as hard as I will! If the boy gets in the papers, up will come the whole story again—whose nephew he is, and all that. Now if he stays at the wharf, will he be put in the papers any more, do you think?"

"I don't think that he will."

"Not that my sister's child—my *own* sister's child, they're sure to say, the wretches!—is drudging on as errand-boy, while I am rich? Why, that's the very thing they will say."

"He will rise in the world. Every honest lad does."

"He must rise not in my service—there, will you take care of him?"

"I have a daughter to care for."

"So have I," was the quick answer.

Martin saw that he was losing ground; he had made a blunder, and hastened to rectify it.

"It is not my duty—it is yours," said Martin; "were he my sister's child—"

"Good gracious!" gasped the shocked Polly, in a subdued voice.

"I would devote myself to him and his advancement."

"And how would he reward it?"

"I should look for a higher reward than his," said Martin.

"Oh! how dreadfully pious you are!" said the lady, rising; "you're an amusing man, for you are interested in every thing, and I have so great a trouble to find interest any where. Well, I will try this boy for three months—there, Mr. Martin Wynn, see what a convert you have made!"

"I am really flattered," said Martin, politely; "I am sure that we are all obliged."

"In three months let me know the result. You," pointing her bottle of smelling-salts like a pistol at Martin, "tell me the result, if it be a good one."

"I may be in Paris again, madam."

"Whatever are you?" said Mrs. Henwood, tetchily—"a detective policeman?"

"I am a marqueterie-worker."

"Indeed," said Mrs. Henwood, thoughtfully; "a good one?—for whose house do you work?—what makes you go to France?—for whom?—what salary do you earn?"

Mr. Wynn only condescended to reply to one of these questions.

"I go to France for the reason that we have a branch house abroad, and I am handy there."

"He's the first in the—" began Polly, when Mr. Martin Wynn checked her by a look.

"Then Zach is to be reported upon in three months' time—at this place?"

"Here! Oh! no; I shall never come here again—it's a dreadful neighborhood! At my villa at Wimbledon."

"Very well."

"You are a sharp man—a clever one, perhaps—at all events, you are a man who will not impose upon me. Watch that boy for three months, and then bring him to me, if he be still trying to become respectable. But—"

She rose, and put her salts into an embroidered bag that hung upon her arm; she took a deep breath, and lost all her languid manners when she spoke again.

"But if he prove false to this house—if he go wrong by ever so little—which he will—don't come, and let me never hear of him again! Will you promise that?"

"I promise," said Martin.

"Give me your arm, and help me down stairs, Mr. Wynn," she said; "how I ever got up such a staircase, Heaven knows!"

Mr. Wynn, thus adjured, escorted Mrs. Henwood down stairs to her carriage, saw her safely within it, and stood hesitating at the door.

"Have you any thing more to say?" she asked.

"Nothing more."

"Nothing about Sunday traveling like this?—that's in your way, I suppose?"

"It's a bad practice to be rattling about in a carriage on the Sabbath-day," said Martin, thus adjured; "but you are weak, perhaps?"

"I am nothing of the sort. Why, I could have walked from Wimbledon, if I had liked."

"Ah! then, I would have liked."

"You are a very plain-spoken man—very proud of being abrupt and bearish, I have no doubt."

Martin started a little at this.

"Try and polish yourself more, along with your furniture," she said; "it will not do you any harm, *old play-fellow*."

Martin started more than ever, as well he might, Mrs. Henwood accompanying her last remark by a long and affected laugh—a laugh that at a hundred yards' distance might have been taken for genuine, and passed for "girl-ish." Before he had recovered his equanimity, a gloved hand was extended to him.

"Good-day, Mr. Wynn. I have been very much amused."

"Good-day, ma'am."

The carriage drove off, and Martin Wynn looked after it stolidly for a while.

"If she isn't touched in the head, it's odd to me," he muttered, before he proceeded up stairs again.

Up stairs, Polly ran into his arms, and kissed him, laughing and crying at the same time.

"What a dreadful woman!" she cried; "and, oh! Martin, how clever of you to talk her round to pitying our Zach!"

"She's a little variable—I saw it in her eyes," said Martin; "and I thought that she would change in good time. Where's that boy?"

Zach and Christie entered at this moment. It was very dark in the room, and had Polly not given a sudden stir to the fire, and rendered the little place all aglow, the night would have gained the mastery over them.

"Zach," said Martin, "I want to speak to you."

Zach came and stood before Martin Wynn, held his ground for a time against the steady, searching eyes, then looked down and shuffled with his feet.

"You know more about that lady than you have owned, Zach."

"Me, sir?"

"Come, out with it. Let us start fairly. Who is she?"

"My aunt."

"Ah! exactly. Well, if you are sly enough to keep that to yourself for three months longer, it may not do you any harm. Although I object to slyness, mind."

Zach nodded his head. He was afraid of this new face confronting him; he scarcely knew what to make of it.

"I'm to look after you for the next three months—I shall drop upon you at all times, and in all kinds of places. You will keep straight?"

"Yes—I think—I will!"

"It's no good thinking—you must promise. I have been made to promise, boy. Say, you will?"

"I will."

"That's better; now, don't break it, or I shall not believe you worth a sixpence any more. Don't break it, for your own sake—for there's a chance ahead of you, and it will die out like a candle-flame, and leave us all in the dark, if you're not plucky."

The boy caught at the last word—it belonged to his vocabulary, and placed them both on a level. This was what Martin Wynn had wished.

"I'll be plucky, sir. I'm getting on!" cried Zach, almost with enthusiasm; "it isn't so hard as it was."

"That's well, too," said Martin, clapping him on the shoulder. "With every day we'll drop a bad habit, and tramp it under foot. We'll not give way—we'll do our best in the sight of man and of God."

Zach burst suddenly into tears, and Martin looked at him with greater intentness.

"What are you crying for?"

"I—don't know—hardly," said Zach, drying his eyes. "I had a fright in the street to-day. I saw some one I knowed."

"Who was it!"

"Some one like the *guv'nor*. It wasn't him," he added, after a moment's pause; "but it was like him, werry!"

Martin looked serious; he turned to the fire, and indulged in one of those shrugs which he had learned in France.

"We must do our best," he muttered. "I'm sure we'll all try, except that lad, perhaps. It's very strange that I do not feel much confidence in *his* efforts. What *is* there in that boy that I don't like?"

He took his chin in his hand, as though he enlisted it into the service to solve the mystery. He stooped and looked more intently into the fire, hoping, perhaps, to find it there; he fell into deep thought, with his brow furrowed, and all the smiles quenched from his face. Was he, after all, not so happy a man, or so good-tempered a man as he would have the world—that was, his daughter—believe! Or had the shadow of the evil genius lingering outside still—the watcher for *his* chance!—fallen upon him in that hour, presaging much that was to trouble him?

To trouble more than him, for there were many lives dating afresh from that day. Beyond there in the crowd, as here in the little needle-woman's room, there were lives to be changed, and hearts to be wrung. From the promise of Martin Wynn to Mrs. Henwood—from Zach Fernwell's promise to Martin Wynn—were to evolve plot, mystery and passion. The quiet life flowed away with the tide that rippled out of the inner dock of Henwood's Wharf that night.

BOOK II.

MORE ORDEALS THAN ONE.

CHAPTER I.

OLD FACES.

ZACH FERNWELL went to work industriously after the visit of Mrs. Henwood to Upper Ground Street. He set his shoulder to the wheel, and sank the by-gones; a week after the interview recorded in our last chapter, even Martin Wynn, marqueterie-worker, had greater hopes of him.

Zach worked well in the office; he was regular in his attendance, willing to serve every body, and quick in his service. It seemed as if the knowledge of the ordeal before him, the chance before him when three months were passed, had added a brightness and lightness to his efforts, which rendered his task no longer arduous. Martin Wynn, who had already begun a series of sudden appearances at Upper Ground Street, attributed this change to sundry lectures that he had given Zach, and to Zach's gratitude for his interest in him. He scarcely gave his sister Polly credit for her exertions, for she was a woman easily influenced, and wanting in firmness. It did not strike him that firmness was scarcely the article required for Zach at this juncture, or that the youth under probation took time to comprehend strangers, and was for a time suspicious of them, and their good intentions. Young as Zach was, he had been at war with the world all his life—knowing no friends, scouted by his enemies, the shopkeepers, the police, and the bullies of his own tribe. He had no faith in any one till he settled down in Upper Ground Street, only faith then—after a while—in old Wynn and his daughter. He was afraid of Martin yet, nervous concerning the watch that Martin kept upon him, but he found all encouragement, and hope in Polly Wynn, and

it was she who worked the good in him at which more than she rejoiced.

Polly found something to praise Zach for every day; that was her policy of management, questionable enough in most cases, but having its effect on her protégé. She found time to prophesy concerning the brightness of Zach's future; they stood on the vantage-ground together, like mother and child almost, looking at the brightness of the new estate, and believing in its golden promise. Polly was a castle-builder; she helped to deceive herself as well as other people, for she had faith in the days to come. She saw Zach making his way in the world, for her heart was in Zach's advancement.

There was something singular, almost touching, in this poor woman's love for the boy. Even the boy, unmanageable as he was, was not proof against it. His mother's had been a fitful, wild beast's kind of affection for him; but this woman's was very different, a something which took time to understand, and which, understanding, was likely to endure.

"What makes you care any think about me?" he asked once; "I ain't a relation."

"I love a boy who tries to grow good," was the simple answer; "that's the kind of boy for my money."

"We'll try our hardest."

"That's right. P'raps the mother who prayed that you should alter for the better, watches every step, Zach. I don't think it would do any harm to fancy that."

"Did you ever know my father?"

Polly started.

"Yes, I did," she said almost mournfully.

"I shouldn't like to fancy him a-watching of me," he said shivering; "I can't bear the sight o' him."

"Hush, that is not right. After all, your father—"

"Yes—but you know what he is."

"I have heard that he is—strange. When I saw him last he was sixteen years a younger man—a clever man, who might have made his way in the world like you."

She brought an encouragement for Zach at every turn, and Zach profited thereby. He went to evening-school after this—Martin decided upon that step at once—even reprimanded Polly for having neglected it so long.

"I thought I wouldn't try him too much at once," said Polly, in defense.

"You can not keep a mind like his too much employed," explained Martin.

"You're right, of course, Martin," said his sister deferentially, "I only fancied that he might find schooling hard work to begin upon—after a long day at the wharf. I always found my letters very troublesome—that's why I'm so poor a scholar still, brother."

"Ah, you didn't get much schooling, like me; and you had not the chance of teaching yourself afterward, which I had, thank God!"

"One clever is enough in a family, they say," said Polly, with a laugh, "and I'm glad that that's you. I should find cleverness too much of a trouble to manage."

"If I did not know Polly Wynn, I should set that down for solemn banter," he said, laughing also; "for I know how poor an education mine is, and how much more I have to learn to be presentable. And what with my work, and with Christie, where's the opportunity?"

"Nowhere, I hope," said Polly, sententiously; "for if you ain't content with all the hard words you've got hold of now, you ought to be ashamed of your ingratitude."

Martin, proceeding homeward, after this little dialogue with his sister, was unaware of a follower in his footsteps—a stealthy watcher of his progress. He went on to the end of his journey unsuspectingly—letting himself into his house in Griffin Street, Tottenham Court Road, and closing the door upon a shadowy being who leaped like a wild-cat to the step the instant afterward.

"A four and a five—that's forty-five," said this being; and then he was running out of the street into the busy thoroughfare beyond there, where it is not our task to follow him.

A fortnight afterward we have more to say concerning him, for he was in Upper Ground Street again, where the fog had stolen, rendering all things dense and heavy. From the house of Charles Wynn he saw emerge a boy who ran rapidly along the street, swinging a bag in his hand, and whistling cheerfully. The first impulse took the watcher toward him—the second sent him to the rear, running swiftly and noiselessly in the track—a gray outline in the mist that night.

Zach disappeared down a street on his left—for the boy

who had issued forth was Zach Fernwell, on school duty—and the watcher followed still, noting the house at which the boy stopped, knocked and was admitted.

Later that night, when the fog had thickened more and more, and women were groping their various ways homeward, Zach Fernwell re-emerged, and had not proceeded many yards toward Upper Ground Street, when the watcher took his place at his side, and muttered very feebly and indistinctly his Christian name.

Zach dropped his bag in affright, picked it up once more, and began to tremble somewhat.

"What, Teddy—here again!" he said. "You told us all you wouldn't come no more!"

"No more I would," said Teddy, speaking with difficulty—fighting with his breath, in fact; "but no one's done as I wanted 'em to—that's all. You're sorry to drop upon a feller like me—now?"

"No, not sorry, Teddy," was the slow reply; "but it upsets me like. I can't bear too much."

"Not too much good all of a lump. Oh! it's easy enuf, I dare say."

"You've lost your voice."

"Awful cold—spouted the boots for tenpence, luck not being fust-rate and the weather setting in muggy," croaked Teddy; "never mind the odds of that. So you're sorry to see us, Zach?"

"I didn't say so."

"I never meant to come no more," explained Teddy; "but the gov'nor wouldn't go out of town, and sumfinks in the wind about you."

"Oh! about me. He has found me out—he saw me, Teddy, a Sunday or two ago."

"O' course he did. And didn't I ax the old bloke at the wharf to move you—not that it would have mattered much, arter all—and nobody took no advice o' mine. Werry well—sarves 'em right now, whatever happens!"

"Teddy, I'm trying my hardest to get on. You've heard mother speak of her sister?—well, I've found out—"

"What every body had found out long ago—how sharp on you!" said Teddy, satirically. "I gusses—don't palaver about that."

"In three months she is to give me a lift, I think. Such

a rum old gal! Teddy, you remember the top of father's walking-stick?"

"Why, o' course, he carved it for her."

"Oh! that's it."

"Who's No. 45 Griffin Street?" asked Teddy, in his hoarse whisper.

"Her brother."

"That little woman's brother? Hook it there, then."

"I don't like him—he's a hard un, Teddy. He's one of the precious good uns, that don't like any body to be wus than hisself."

"Hook it there, I tell you, and throw the guv'nor off the scent a bit."

"I don't see how I can. I work at the wharf—I go to school at that place behind here."

"Then it's all up," said Teddy; "he'll call for you; and nobody can't stop him."

Zach could not refrain a groan of dismay at this.

"Why, you wasn't so sweet on that watchman's crib when I comed fust for you; Zach. How they are a-turning you aginst your own flesh and blood! I don't say it isn't all the better," said Teddy, quickly; "but how they are a-turning on you."

"They're good to me. If I could only keep good, Teddy, now, I might, when I'm a man, be rich—*rich*, Teddy—and then of help to you."

"Oh! I don't want no help," said the other. "I's the feller to help myself, and no thanks to nobody. I don't want to see you no more—never no more. I never meant, on'y up turns this blessed mess, and I know you'll be dropped on and walked off. And all the better for you, Zach," he said, in as loud a voice as his huskiness would permit, and much to the astonishment of Zach; "for the guv'nor's a good sort, and you ought to do all you can for him, whatever it is; for if we don't, the three on us, hang together in these hard times, what's the good of being o' one fam'ly at all."

Zach looked in a bewildered manner toward his brother. Had Teddy gone out of his mind?—what was the reason of this sudden change in the nature of his advice? He would have asked the reason had not a hand fell on his shoulder like the clutch of a tiger, and he found himself

twirled into the roadway. Before he could recover his surprise he was on the pavement again, side by side with a round-shouldered man who was walking between Teddy and him, keeping a hand on each.

"Well, Zach, it's pleasant to meet like this, my boy. Thank your brother Teddy for finding you out. Teddy's as clever a fellow as one will meet in a day's walk—a credit to the family!"

Zach gasped for breath. The instinct to escape was strong upon him—the desire to wrench himself free, and hurry away screaming for help, could scarcely be resisted. But he was in the trap now; the father and brother had plotted his capture, he thought, and there he was, a legal prisoner.

"Well, are you not glad to see me, you young dog?" Mr. Fernwell asked with a sudden shake.

"You'll let me go back to *them*—won't you?" asked Zach; "they'll sit up—she'll sit up! Won't you let a feller go back agin?—I can never be any good to you."

"Ah! but you will be, my prodigal," said the father. "We have changed all that, as the French say. We are going into a new line of business, and dear little Zachary will be of infinite use. This way, my child of an unfortunate mother!"

"Where are we going?"

"Keep your mouth shut, or the cold will get on your chest—just as it has on your dear brother's. Where are we going, did you ask?" he said to the boy—"why, *home*, to be sure! This way."

CHAPTER II.

ZACH COMES HOME.

POLLY WYNN sat up late for her protégé. The watchman departed upon night duty, the lodger went to bed, the public-house at the corner closed its doors upon the night, Upper Ground Street was left to itself and the fog, and still no Zach came back to make one solitary woman's heart light.

"He will come back yet—presently—before any body

finds it out, and then I can forgive him," said Polly, after drawing back the blind, and striving to peer into the murkiness below her. "It would be hard, after all our hopes that he'd do better, and grow better, too, if he did not. He'll come," she added assuringly.

Polly had been round to the school, and learned that Zach had left for home some hours since. If he had lost himself in the fog, strayed to the river-side, and so *in*! what an end to a life which had known but little brightening!

"I'll do a bit more work, as Mrs. Spinks the butcher wants this dress for Sunday."

Polly sat down to fresh work, and to a fresh candle to throw light thereon; but the work was not congenial to her frame of mind, and she set it aside, and took up her bonnet and shawl.

"I'll go over to the wharf, and ask father what I shall do."

She had delayed imparting any information to Mr. Wynn until that late hour; now it seemed necessary. Why, there was even a faint hope—the last that hopeful woman had now—that Zach might be keeping her father company. She went down stairs cautiously, opened the street door, and started back in dismay. On the doorstep, with his head on his chest, and his hands in his pockets, sat Zach Fernwell.

"Zach!—oh! good gracious, it is you! Where have you been?—what is the matter?" cried Polly, wringing her hands over him.

Zach rose with difficulty, and turned a white face on Polly Wynn.

"You're ill—you've met with an accident!" she cried.

"Nothink much," said Zach; "don't be skeered—it's nothink."

"Come up stairs and tell me all about it."

Up stairs, and in the little front room, Polly and Zach sat down. Zach shifted his position after Polly had taken up hers, screwing himself in some degree away from her. He was more like the old Zach that night—the boy of two months since whom she had hoped to reform. But Polly, in her anxiety—and in her faith—did not perceive it. She only saw that he was very white, and that his eyes were very bloodshot.

"You lost yourself in the fog?—say you lost yourself," said Polly.

Zach said so accordingly. Any thing to oblige a lady interested in his actions.

"Yes—I got lost."

"And then?"

"And then I got knocked down by a horse and cart."

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!—did you, though?"

"And picked up agin, and tooked into a doctor's."

"What did the doctor say?"

"That nothink was the matter, and I could go home—which I tried to do, but my head got thicker, and the fog got thicker, and I couldn't find the place out."

"But here you are at last, Zach!—why didn't you knock?"

"I tried, and couldn't somehow. Then I must have gone to sleep there, thinking that I had. Oh! my head!"

"You'll be better in the morning. I'd go to bed now. Oh! Zach, I was almost afraid that you had met some one, and that they had persuaded you never to come back."

"Ah! that isn't likely, now."

Zach went to bed at once. It might have been noticed that he carried his candlestick unsteadily, and that he still walked with difficulty; but Polly, packing up her needle-work, failed to detect the weakness. Zach maintained that he was all right now, that he could not eat any supper, and but wanted rest; then Polly kissed him like a mother, and he went to his small back room, locked the door upon all intruders, set down his candlestick, and then dropped silently to the floor, crouching there with his head supported by the bedside, as he had crouched with his head against the door in Upper Ground Street.

"Oh! the drink!—why did he make me drink?" moaned Zach. "What does it all mean—and what's to come on it? It's all up, I know—but what's to come on it!"

He sat wondering what was advancing on its way toward him—he held his head between his hands and tried to think. It was a miserable, old, and pinched face on which the light shimmered in that room. More, it was a disappointed face, looking out, as it were, upon a darkness that cast back its shadow on him.

Suddenly he leaned forward his hands upon the floor, his eyes dilating, his breath suspended. In the next room, divided by a thin partition from his own, some one was pray-

ing—praying aloud in her intensity for him—thanking God again that he had returned, as the woman had thanked Him once already.

The boy's face darkened more and more; once he moaned as though in pain—as though his feeble sense of right had revived again, and stabbed him. Why did this woman care so much for him?—what good was he to any body?—what good was likely to come to him now?

"It's all gone," he said; then he lay back in his old crouching position; "it's no good trying no more. Why didn't he let me stop away with him and Teddy. It would have been better for the lot on us."

He went to sleep in that position, breathing long and heavily; the daylight came in at the window-blind, and found him there still. Could Polly Wynn have seen that miserable face in the day-dawn, she might have read a warning from it, and have lost much hope in him.

CHAPTER III.

THE BEARER OF GOOD NEWS.

ZACH's adventure in the fog was scarcely a nine-days' wonder; for Zach was at home again, proceeding steadily to business in the daytime, and to school in the evening, and keeping no late hours.

The watchman heard the story and believed it; why, the fog had been so thick in his warehouse yard, that he might have fallen into the inner dock, and no one the wiser, till he turned up with the tide somewhere about Blackwall! Martin Wynn heard the story in due course, and laughed at it, in his usual good-tempered way. What! was a sharp lad like Zach inclined to lose himself so readily, he said; and then the subject was dismissed, and Zach was more easy in his mind concerning it.

He was not quite so easy in his mind concerning Martin Wynn's behavior, however; he had never taken kindly to that gentleman; he had even distrusted the laugh with which Martin had received the narrative of his adventures. He did not care to meet Martin too frequently; and it was a source of perplexity to him why Martin looked in at odd

times of the day and night, once met him coming home from school just as his father had met him, and walked back with him to Upper Ground Street. The months of probation went round—the March winds set in, the April showers came—they were bawling “primroses” in Upper Ground Street—the early days of May stole round, and the three months of Zach’s probation were nearly at an end.

It was an early day in May, then—one evening before the gas was lighted in the streets—that a knock, heavy and impressive, was delivered at the door of No. 45 Griffin Street, Tottenham Court Road. A heavy and impressive knock, and yet delivered by a hand that trembled somewhat as it was raised toward the knocker.

Presently the door was opened, and a child stood in the doorway.

“Is Mr. Wynn in, miss?” was asked, in a hoarse voice.

“No, he is not. Is it business?”

“Yes.”

“Are you from Stanley and Burns?”

“No, I ain’t.”

“My father will not be at home till half past eight, I know.”

“Thankee—then I’ll call agin.”

At half past eight to the minute, the call was renewed, Christie Wynn appearing at the door once more.

“At home yet?”

Christie shook her head.

“Where’s he gone?—can’t I find him any wheres?—at the public round the corner, miss?”

“He has been out all day—you’ll never find my father in a public-house,” said Christie, with severity.

“Oh!—I thought I might.”

“Is it any thing important?” asked the daughter.

“Werry—or I shouldn’t have comed.”

“You can sit down here,” pointing to a hall chair in the passage, “and wait here, if you like. I do not think that Mr. Wynn will be long.”

“Thankee—I’ll wait, I think.”

Christie Wynn seemed to repent of her invitation, as the stranger stepped into the passage. She looked at him long and anxiously. In the full light of the hall lamp burning there, he was not a presentable object—a tall, ungainly be-

ing, very shabbily attired, with one boot and a shoe as pedal adornments, and two black eyes as facial ditto.

"You needn't be afeared," said he, reading the expression on Christie's face correctly; "I'll sit here quiet as a mouse."

"Oh! I'm not afraid," replied Christie, drawing herself up proudly; "what have I to be afraid of?"

"Well—I bite," exclaimed the other.

Christie gave a slight jump backward, and Teddy—for it was he—smiled for an instant, and then became suddenly grave.

"On'y my fun, and it ain't much of a time for fun either," said he, with a half groan; "I do hope he won't be long."

"I hope not."

Christie Wynn went up stairs, and was heard to lock herself in; Teddy Fernwell sat down on the extreme edge of the hall chair, put his large hat on his knees, and his hands into his hat, looked up at the ceiling, at the floor-cloth, glanced in the direction of the stairs again.

"I wonder what sort of chap this is?" he muttered once, "or what he'll think of me?"

A quarter of an hour's patient duty in the hall chair, and then Teddy became aware of Christie Wynn watching him from the balusters in the background.

"It's all right, miss, I ain't took nothink. I ain't moved," he said.

"Why, do you think I take you for a thief," said Christie, almost angrily, "or that my father has not taught me better than to suspect every body I meet?"

"Take me for a thief—well, I hope I ain't quite so bad as that!"

Christie Wynn withdrew again; but she was an inquisitive girl, and had not yet satisfied her curiosity concerning this arrival. She was alone in that first floor front, waiting patiently for her father's return—the supper laid, Martin's chair placed for him, and his slippers on the hearth-rug—and the consciousness of a stranger in the house rendered her fidgety and watchful.

She appeared again.

"Will you have a book to read, young man?" she asked.

"No, thankee, miss, I don't do any thing in that line."

"Not read?"

"Well, no."

"A big boy like you—almost a man! Oh! dear—I am very sorry!" And exit Christie once more, locking herself in as usual, for precaution's sake.

Teddy sat and considered these last remarks. He laughed to himself at the sympathetic voice he had recently heard; rubbing his great red hands together, as though the novelty of a child's sympathy for him was fresh and new, and a something to be appreciated. He flung his head back, and opened a large mouth to say, "That is not so bad;" then suddenly became grave again with the graver thoughts that had brought him to that house. Presently a key was inserted in the latch without, the door was opened, and Martin Wynn stepped briskly into the passage.

"Halloo!" he said, perceiving Teddy on the instant, "who are you?"

"I've come on business—my name's Teddy—Zach's brother."

"Oo'h!" said Martin, doubtfully regarding him; "have you come about Zach?"

"Yes."

"Bad news?"

"Why, no, sir," cried Teddy, with alacrity, "*good news!*"

"Why didn't he bring it himself?"

"I'll tell you presently."

"Come up stairs, and wipe your feet, please."

"I'd—I'd rather talk here."

"I have no secrets from my daughter—and you may trust her with any thing."

"Werry good;" and Teddy Fernwell followed Martin Wynn up stairs to the sitting-room, and stood an amazed witness to the affectionate greeting between father and child. *That* was incomprehensible, for there was no evidence of affection in his way—lots of kicks, but no kisses.

Martin dropped into a chair, and his daughter proceeded to unlace for him a pair of stout double-soled Balmorals; Teddy compared every thing new with his past experience, and thought how those boots would hurt!

"I have been wondering a great deal about you, father," said Christie, "thinking how late you were, and what I should do if you never came home any more."

"A cheerful thought!—is that what you call keeping your spirits up, my girl?"

"But you are never quite so late as this."

"There are times when one can not help being late, Christie," replied her father. "Now, young fellow, will you take a chair? Will you come to the fire?"

"I'll sit here," said Teddy, subsiding into a chair by the door.

"Well, what's your business?"

"I'll just take a breath, please," said Teddy. "I've on'y jist got over a horrible hoarseness, and I'm shortish here."

He tapped his chest so forcibly, that it sounded like a drum.

"All right! I'm in no hurry."

Martin Wynn stirred the fire, and awaited Teddy Wynn's pleasure. Teddy gasped once or twice for breath, took stock of the room and its contents, and sat for a while, evidently collecting his ideas.

It was a large apartment, partaking of the character of a drawing-room to a certain extent—to a certain extent even of a workshop. Entering it suddenly, one would have been puzzled at its general appearance; it might have represented "a set scene in two compartments." Economy of space had partly necessitated this arrangement, while a desire to keep his daughter under his own eyes had also been Martin Wynn's inducement for the eccentric disposal of the first floor front. On the drawing-room side were evidences of much taste; all was neat and good, if a little Frenchy, as might have been expected from people who had traveled. There were flowers on the mantle-piece, on a centre-table, even on a little chess-table by the window; all the small spring flowers that a few pence would procure added a grace and harmony to the place, and told of a thoughtful daughter's ministering. The furniture was sound and substantial; Martin Wynn was, to all intents and purposes, a workman well to do.

One portion of the first floor was doubtless the exclusive domain of Martin—the workshop, manufactory, and study. Signs of order and rule were manifest enough there also, but the place was full of tools, burdened by a bench, and a four-legged hybrid between a stool and a form, and termed a "Neddy" in the trade. Several pieces of veneering were

ranged against the walls ; a small table top, half inlaid with colored woods, was set out, as if for to-morrow's work ; a large and cumbrous piece of furniture of some description, covered by canvas, and looking like a wardrobe in its shroud, took up the space by the door, through which Teddy had recently followed the proprietor.

Teddy was evidently of an observant character, for he noted all these details, and more than these, his quick eyes darting from one object of interest to another, despite the embarrassment of his position there.

Teddy sat in the workshop while Martin Wynn and daughter looked from their drawing-room toward him.

"When you're so disposed, you know," hinted Martin at last, and Teddy's legs twitched nervously under the chair, and a something went rolling and gurgling down Teddy's throat at this appeal.

"All right, mister—I'm quite ready."

Teddy tucked his large hat under the chair, and cleared his throat again.

"It's about Zach, o' course."

Martin nodded.

"I've heard all about Zach, being his brother, you see ; and I know that there's a somebody going to take him in hand, and trot him into the 'spectable line, just as well as you do."

"Who told you ?" asked Martin, quietly.

"You mayn't know," continued Teddy, taking his hat from beneath the chair to place it on his knees again, and tapping the rim nervously with both hands, "that I called wunst at Ground Street, and told the watchman—that's your father—to take Zach funder off, if he didn't want the guv'nor to drop on him. Well, he didn't do nothink of the sort, and the guv'nor dropped on him accordingly. That wasn't Zach's fault."

"Go on."

"You don't know what a rum un, and a deep un, the guv'nor is, sir," said Teddy, setting his hat down again, "and how hard it was for Zach to fight agin him, and do his best. You don't know how hard it was for me to pretend to be on both sides, so as to keep a hi on Zach, and budge him up at a pinch. But lor' bless you, Zach didn't want any budging up, sir ; he was right as ninepence !"

"Was he?"

"I knowed it, sir, this arternoon, when he came to me all of a hurry, and axed me to come on to you."

"Oh! did he?" said Martin Wynn, warming to a greater interest in the story; "what did he send you here for?"

"I don't ax you to turn agin my father, but to let him be. He won't do any harm now, cos he can't, in fact; and I ain't here to split agin him, or any body. This—all of this—atween you and me and Zach."

"And Christie," added Martin Wynn—"well, go on."

"Zach was afeard of being took away home—tooked right off into the country on tramp—so he was 'bliged to play the artful, and purtend to be on the square with the old man. He was 'bliged to meet him, Zach was, sir."

"He met him several times—I am aware of it."

"And it might have set you agin Zach," said Teddy, looking very intently toward Martin Wynn, "and the boy meaning good all the time, lor' bless yer! I don't know no one who means more good than little Zach."

"Well, the proof of all this goodness. Have you come here to make me believe in it all?"

"Zach couldn't make father out, sir, till last night. Last night father wanted the key of the gate of Henwood's Wharf—and the key of the counting-house door inside—on'y for a minit or two, jist to look at, sir! He thought Zach might manage it, and he said he'd kill Zach if he didn't. Well, Mr. Wynn, Zach brought 'em round to our house this arternoon, cos he said he would—cos he couldn't help it—and the guv'nor took copies on 'em."

Martin Wynn sprang to his feet, and was ready for action at once.

"The place may be robbed to-night!" he said. "What else have you to say? Be quick!"

"On'y that Zach came on to me—I'm not a lodging with father at present, cos of a little dispute atween us—and told me all, sir, crying werry much, and begged me to come on to you, and tell you all; and ax me to explain, sir, how it seems as if he wasn't doing right, which he was all along, and to see the guv'nor's game. He couldn't say any think afore that you might have thought was truth—now, sir, he thinks he can."

"Why did he not come himself?"

"He went off at once to the head un at the office—who knows him—and who was at the t'other place to-day, and they've been a-changing the locks, and stopping any bit of play the guv'nor might have been a-thinking over. I was to come on here to save time."

"I do not see that I can do any good—the scheme is frustrated, and the clerks are on their guard."

"No, you can't do any think more in that," assented Teddy, still nervous, still embarrassed by his big hat, and still a riddle to the comprehension of the marqueterie-worker.

"I do not see why your brother, or my sister, or my father, might not have been the messenger here instead of you. Why, to-morrow might not have done for this story," said Martin. "You're sure that all is safe at the wharf?"

"Quite sure."

"I have a better opinion of Zach; he has been playing a foolish game—playing with fire—but he was acting for the best in his own judgment, and he has been of service to the firm. It's good news, and I am not sorry that all my suspicions of him end like this. I have been watching him, for Mrs. Henwood's sake as well as his own, and I was losing all my trust."

"Was you, though? I'm werry sorry, for that was hard on him."

"I thought that he was turning away from those who had protected him. I did not admire the boy very much—there, I own it—but I have been interested in his progress lately, and in the mystery surrounding him. I see all now—it would have been better, perhaps, to have schemed less, and been more frank, but his moral training has been sadly neglected. I hope that he will be a bright man—with his natural shrewdness, he ought to be. There, I make every allowance for Zach Fernwell, and am sorry for all past suspicions. A singular boy—but better than I fancied him."

"I said so long ago," said Christie, to whom he had addressed these remarks rather than to Teddy.

"Ah! you are like Aunt Polly, seeing a brightness in the darkest places—like all good women, for the matter of that. But *you*,"—turning suddenly toward Teddy—"you I can't make out at all!"

Teddy shrank at this direct appeal; he cowered from Martin as though a blow from that quarter were to be aimed

at him, and by shrinking it was possible to evade the full force of it. He looked at the piece of furniture standing in its shroud against the wall—it was the object most remote from Martin Wynn. He shuffled nervously with his feet, kicking out suddenly the hat he had once more deposited on the floor, and sending it into the middle of the room.

"You are Zach's brother. What are *you* doing?"

"I'd rather not be axed about myself," he said, in a low, hoarse voice. "I'm older, harder altogether, and no good's in me—none at all—never was—never likely to be—don't want any!"

"You are interested in your brother Zach?"

Teddy nodded, without altering the direction of his face.

"You don't want him to grow up like yourself?"

"Who—I? well, not now."

"How old are you?"

"Blest if I know!" with a sudden, short laugh, like the crack of a whip. "Somebody says I'm fourteen—it's more likely to be forty. I ain't done talking about Zach yet. May I go on?"

"Certainly."

"Zach will be a credit to you all—for he never was really bad. Mother took care of him—father of me. That made all the difference atwixt us, for I got badder and badder; he betterer and betterer. I've been to prison lots of times, sir—Zach never was inside one. You'll see to Zach now, I hope?"

"See to him—yes."

"Though father's runned off in case the perlice should turn up, he may come back to pay off Zach for turning against him; he'll never forgive Zach—he ain't a man that's likely to forgit a disappointment. You'll take Zach out of the way, where he can't be found; that's all I want, sir. Clean gone from the lot on us, until he's older, bigger, and able to stand his ground."

"If your father claims him, there is no power to keep Zach from him."

"He won't do it, sir; he don't like making hisself public. There's a lot o' things agin him; but do take Zach to Mrs. Henwood's—the three months is up on Tuesday."

"What do you know about the three months?"

"I've heerd it all; hasn't Zach been trying to do some

good for Mrs. Henwood in that time?—hasn't he done it to-day, sir?"

"After a fashion, perhaps—yes."

"Walk him off to her, sir," said Teddy again; "let her know what Zach has done, and let him be hiked away from Ground Street, to where nobody can find him. I don't want to find him—to know nothink about him—to be able to tell who he is, when he grows a big man. I've made up my mind to let him go."

"Why?"

"I don't know," said Teddy.

"Try and think. Why?" repeated Martin Wynn.

The boy, whom he could not understand, shook his head at this second appeal. He had no answer ready to the tongue; he could not explain himself or his motives. He was in the dark concerning them.

"Is it for Zach's sake?" asked Martin, after a pause.

"Well—most likely."

"You would not like Zach to come back and live with you, then?"

"No," after a moment's hesitation; "he's a weak un, arter all. He can't rough it well; he'd get into trouble. I can't be allers helping other chaps."

"One of the family off your hands, then?"

"Yes," said Teddy after another pause.

"Still you came for him once in Upper Ground Street."

Teddy shuddered.

"I didn't know what they were a-doing to him—I didn't know if he was safe—if he didn't want to get away. But when he a'most wanted to stop, and the little 'ooman blowed me up for doing him harm—when he didn't want any one to fight for him, or take his part, or didn't care so much about me as he used, I comed away—for—good!"

"I think you like this brother of yours?" mused Martin.

"He was a lively little chap enuf," said Teddy—"sharp as a needle, and he took to me a bit, until mother walked him off along with her. That's all, sir."

"And you wish to see Zach grow up a good man—a good and prosperous man."

"Mother said he would—mother was a gennelman's daughter, and must have knowed."

"And if mother's words come true, you'll not be sorry?"

"Who—I? 'Pon my soul, Mister Wynn, I should like to see little Zach a swell some day. Jist for one o' us like to be in the sterrups."

"And not this one?"

Martin had approached to the side of Teddy Fernwell unobserved; and the hand that fell on Teddy's shoulder startled the odd specimen of human nature sitting there with its head studiously averted from all searching eyes.

Teddy cowered more and more.

"No, not this one," he said silently.

"This one might be turned into the right road, if he were strong, patient, and had faith. I think so."

"Oh, no!"

"I am sure so."

"Not a haputh of chance, sir—I don't like this talk. I've been locked up," he repeated, as though that fact was absolute, and killed all hope—"locked up heaps o' times, Mister Wynn!"

"Never mind that just now."

"I can't keep my hands to myself—I likes to take things as don't belong to me. I've been brought up to it; I'm a reg'lar!"

"You would rather go on a thief to the end, than turn honest?"

"I can't be honest—it isn't in me," was the dogged answer.

"Why, you—"

"I want nothing for myself," said Teddy, fiercely; "I ain't come here to be preached to—that dodge won't do for me, I'm too old, and it's been tried afore. Keep Zach away from all on us—Zach you'll be proud on some day, when father and me are lurches, p'r'aps. I'm a-going now."

"No—don't go yet," said Martin.

For the second time, Teddy looked into the face of the man by his side. It was a quick, half-frightened glance—these Wynns were all "rum people," but this one, he thought, "the rummest!"

"I want to understand you better," said Martin; "I am always put out when there comes across my path some one or something that is incomprehensible. It upsets my pride in analyzing human action, and I am a proud man."

"I don't know what you mean," muttered Teddy.

"Very likely not—I am forgetting my listener. Now, about yourself. You go back to your father?"

"No—he's stepped it."

"What will you do without him?"

"Oh! take care of myself," he added, with a short laugh once more.

"Where do you live?"

"Drag's Court, Seven Dials."

"What number?"

"What do you want to know for?"

"What number?"

"Seven."

"Top floor, I suppose?"

"No—bottom—in the cellar."

Martin repressed a shudder.

"Ah! saves a lot of stairs—may I come and see you?"

Teddy glanced again furtively at Martin Wynn.

"Is this a lark of yours?" he asked.

"I thought that you might be glad to hear now and then how Zach was getting on—I am often near Drag's Court, and it will not be much trouble to look in and tell you all the news."

"I'll come here for it."

"I am not always at home."

"Nor more am I," said Teddy.

"And this is an honest home, and I shall be glad, very glad, to see you in it, when you are honest yourself. Not till then—any more."

"I ain't likely to trouble you much," said Teddy, sharply.

Martin watched him attentively; he had almost touched Teddy's self-respect, and there was a faint evidence of pride in the lad before him.

"But I am likely to trouble you—say next Wednesday evening?"

"What!"

"Zach and I are going to Mrs. Henwood's on the Tuesday—you will be glad to hear what Mrs. Henwood means to do with your brother?"

"Send him away, I hope."

"But you will be glad to hear?"

"Yes," muttered Teddy; "but it's no good you're coming to my place—it isn't safe—it isn't worth while."

"Oh! yes, it is."

"Werry well—you can do as you like."

Teddy gave up all attempt to understand Martin Wynn's motives; they were beyond his comprehension, and he never let his comprehensive faculty wear itself to death by overwork. This man was very strange—nothing like any man whom he had seen before—but he had been interested in his brother Zach. Teddy had feared that that interest had taken a turn for the worse, and had called at Griffin Street to do his best to alter that impression. That task done, allusions to himself and his own life were to be resented. He was content, he thought, with his position—deeply impressed with the belief that it was too late to alter it, and he repelled all interference with his dark estate. He was "a bad un." Every body told him that, and he believed it implicitly, and acted up to the standard of that belief. He preyed on society, and society hunted him down occasionally, and locked him up—it was a game of Fast and Loose between them; if he won, he laughed triumphantly; and if he lost, he took the law's punishment with coolness. There was nothing in the world to fret about, and he was a happy fellow in his way. At all events, he tried hard to think so, wondering occasionally why he thought so much concerning it.

"I s'pose you don't want to say any more to me?" said Teddy.

"Not at present. I shall see you again."

Teddy laughed.

"You'll never come to my place."

"I always keep my word," said Martin.

Teddy rose and picked up his hat.

"I shall find you at home?"

"Well—yes."

"Good-night, then."

Teddy bade Mr. Wynn good-night, keeping his eyes directed to the floor, muttered a response to the same salutation proffered by Christie, and then shuffled down stairs, and let himself out of the house and into the street. He breathed freer in the open air; he flung up his arms in exultation; then he flung up his hat, caught it again, and set it on his head. He began running, then he stopped to consider; then he ran on again, till he reached the Tottenham Court Road,

where no less a personage was waiting for him than his brother Zach.

Zach Fernwell was very white—his eyes very red—his whole face a strangely intent one, full of suppressed excitement.

"All right—you needn't come with me, Zach," said Teddy, upon meeting him.

"He don't guess all, then, Teddy?"

"I've told him nothink."

"Not that you—"

"Not that I did any think but come to him as you wanted me to. There, it is the best now, Zach. It's been an awful row at home, but it's all over; and nobody will never know nothink about it."

"No," said Zach, moodily.

"It's turned out uncommon well, ain't it?"

"Oh! Teddy, Teddy," cried the younger brother, "if it hadn't been for you!"

"Hush! hold your row!" said Teddy, looking round him; "it's square now—keep it so. You're going to Henwood's—Aunt Henwood's—on the Tuesday—it will be square then, o' course. Now, never say a word about what happened this morning—never."

"Never."

"Wish you may die, Zach?"

"Wish I may die, Teddy!"

"Now, go home, and think how lucky you've been. Grow up your best, will yer?"

"And you, Teddy."

"Oh! don't bother about me, boy," said Teddy; "here's off for good! Take a long look at us, Zach, for it's never no more this time—never no more, young feller."

Teddy took Zach by both arms above the elbow, held him thus a moment, then pushed him away from him, and—was gone!

CHAPTER IV.

"AFTER DINNER."

THERE had been a grand dinner-party at Esterfield Lodge, Wimbledon. Mrs. Henwood was not only fond of society, but anxious to shine in it, to be praised by it, and, in every sense of society's ambiguous phrase, to be "made much of." Vain of her position in that "set" for which she lived, she spared no money to give *éclat* to those entertainments which, neither few nor far between, helped to keep the crowd of fashion round her. She had found all her old friends again, and made many new ones; with a restless energy worthy of a better cause, she had striven hard for observation; she had let nothing escape her in her efforts to be fashionable.

Well, she succeeded on the whole; for she was a rich woman who valued wealth alone for the popularity it bought her. She dressed well, lived well, and summoned the world to see her live; she had come back from the Continent fuller of life and spirits than we might have imagined, from the first sight of her on board the Boulogne boat. In society, she showed off to advantage; the side scenes of life, the early mornings when she took breakfast in bed, and the French curls were on the dressing-table, or later in the night, when her carriage brought her back from ball, theatre, or opera, and she was toiling wearily up stairs, or the Sundays, when she was *ennuyée* with the labors of the week, this history need not comment upon at present.

Mrs. Henwood had been "showing off" that evening. The reader looks in upon her showing off to the best of her ability in the drawing-room of Esterfield Lodge, a room containing sixteen or eighteen guests, among whom were flitting stately flunkies, with calves and coffee-trays predominant.

Possibly it would not require a great effort to believe Mrs. Henwood less than thirty-five at that moment; there was no sea air to disturb her equanimity; the wines had been good—*entre nous*, Mrs. Henwood had a weakness for sparkling Moselle—the hair-dresser from Bond Street had

spent two hours over her, and the ladies' maids had done their best with the lilac silk, white lace, and diamonds.

Such diamonds! Large enough to be sham ones, and yet real, and of the first water, and not on hire. Mrs. Henwood was proud of her diamonds, as she had reason to be, for she had spent one fortune upon them—she had fortunes to spend, for fortunes were flowing in upon her steadily yet, thanks to Mr. Tinchester's good management—why should she not carry twenty or thirty thousand pounds about her head and neck, as well as people no better off than she was?

She was alone in the world, a daughter excepted, and had but herself to study; let her gather the flowers and the diamonds while she might, the morrow would take care of itself, she did not doubt. Sufficient for the day was the comfort thereof!

There were a few wholesalers and their wives in the drawing-room—nice company, if you admire eloquence about the “shop,” and the money flowing into the till—one baronet, who was fond of “dinners,” and looking up friends to do bills for him; the family solicitors, the family doctor, the family friend, in the shape of Mr. Tinchester, a little wiry man, with pink eyes; and Lettice Henwood, very dignified and stiff on the satin damask couch, and proud of forming one of this reunion.

Mrs. Henwood we see at her best now, with her company face, assuming all her company airs, rattling away volubly on every topic that came uppermost, gesticulating perhaps a trifle too much with her white kids, and rolling her head certainly too much on her whiter shoulders, but charming company! Every body considered Mrs. Henwood a charming woman—and every body's opinion is worth something. If we could get every body of one opinion—a good and favorable opinion—concerning the books we write, the things we say, the plays we act, and the acts we do, what lucky fellows we should be!

Mrs. Henwood was one of the lucky ones, at least, for the world paid her homage, and called her a nice woman. And she who studied the world, lived and *slaved* for it, was surely deserving of the epithet.

Conversation began to flag a little at Esterfield Lodge, despite all the efforts of the hostess; Lettice had been asked to play a sonata, and was now hammering away at the sec-

ond part; no less than three wholesalers had gone to sleep, four young wholesalers had settled down in a remote corner to whist, and constituted themselves an exclusive party, with nothing to say to general company; there was only one flirtation, and that was between the doctor's daughter and a youth with a turn-down collar, and a lisp; the solicitors, Jones and Jenkins, were buried among some middle-aged ladies, who wore elaborate caps; Mr. Tinchester had found his way very cautiously, and even reverently, to the side of his mistress.

Let it be said here, that Mr. Tinchester was devoted to his mistress, as well as to her worldly affairs; an honest little man, ten years her senior, who would have died for Mrs. Henwood, and Mrs. Henwood's interest. He had been in love with Mrs. Henwood from the day of the funeral of the late Mr. Henwood, wharfinger; he had served her faithfully for love, and he was buoyed up with the hope of even making her Mrs. Tinchester one fine day *in futuro*. He could afford to wait, he thought; there was no rival in the field; he was in no hurry himself; he would not mar one chance of securing his prize by precipitate action. He was content with attending those dinner-parties to which she did him the honor to invite him, keeping himself very humbly in the background, and contenting himself with a quiet, solemn-faced, business kind of flirtation toward the close of the evening, when every body had said every thing to the hostess that was proper and suitable, and he felt that he should not be in the way. Mrs. Henwood was accustomed to laugh behind Mr. Tinchester's back, at Mr. T.'s grave attentions, and faithful reverence—to ridicule him after a very happy manner, in which she excelled, when it pleased her—but she put on the charming stop in his presence, and kept him fascinated by her eye; a bobtailed, middle-aged bird, waiting the signal to be enthralled by the coils of the serpent.

Mrs. Henwood had made up her mind that evening to astonish the company by a recital of an interesting adventure, and the time seemed fitting for it at last. All the compliments had been paid; all the funny anecdotes related, and the carriages would be ordered their separate ways in a little while.

Mrs. Henwood suddenly dashed into the subject, and the company became all attention. We need not follow her

story in its details, narrated though it was with much fluency, self-possession, and easy grace. It is the story of Zach Fernwell, told with considerable embellishment, and making a greater hero out of Zach than might have been anticipated. The story told by Teddy last night to Martin Wynn, but in a way that would have surprised both those friends of ours. How Zach, her nephew—son of a half-sister, who had made a *mésalliance*, poor thing, despite all the good advice that had been proffered her—had proved himself to possess some of the good blood of the family. How he had saved the firm from being robbed of a large sum of money by feigning to be seduced from his allegiance by the designing robbers—she did not allude to her relationship with *them*—and then exploding the plot at the last minute, and putting his benefactors on their guard.

"Such a boy as that I respect," she said in conclusion. "I shall place him in good hands, and make him a business man if I can, and if money can do it. A sharp lad, whom I take in hand from to-night, and give him every chance, watching over him like a mother. He will grow up a bright man—I shall be proud of this child of my adoption."

"A noble return for faithful service," murmured the family doctor, and that opinion was indorsed on the spot by every member of the social circle.

Mrs. Henwood was looked upon as a heroine—a something more than a woman grateful for past services. And this Zach was a lucky fellow, who would drop in for a handsome thing, no doubt. The baronet only wished that he was Zach, with half Zach's chances of getting on in life.

It was at this juncture that the head footman—and a man evidently conscious of being head of the establishment, he walked so pompously and well—advanced to Mrs. Henwood, and whispered a few words.

"Why, the hero has actually arrived," said Mrs. Henwood. "Pray excuse me for a few minutes—I am very anxious to see him."

"May we beg the favor of a glimpse of him," asked one of the guests; "heroes are scarce nowadays, and we are all very curious."

"Patience—*nous verrons*."

Mrs. Henwood went out of the room with her girlish laugh predominant, shaking her fan, jeweled at the hilt, at the last speaker.

Outside the door, the company-face vanished, and she stood there on the broad landing-place with her hand upon her bosom, silent and thoughtful.

"I have shown them into the green-room, madam," said the footman in the rear.

"Oh, are you there?" she said. "Go down stairs to the door, and announce me."

The footman preceded her; and Mrs. Henwood looked carefully at herself in a little oval glass inserted in the handle of her fan. Yes, she was looking well; such a man as Martin Wynn should see her at her best that night, and be astonished at her charms!

At the door of the green-room—bearing that appellation on account of green silk furniture, and green silk curtains sweeping from corniced windows.

"Mrs. Henwood."

It was a superfluous formality to announce the lady in her own house, but it had its effect, and added to the grace of her appearance.

She sailed into the room; then paused and looked round with more sharpness and less stateliness. A little woman, neatly, but poorly dressed, rose at her entrance, taking Zach by the hand, and compelling him to rise also.

"Where is your brother?" she asked. "I was not aware that any promise of yours was made to bring that boy hither. I did not expect *you*."

"He left for Paris this morning on urgent business—he and his daughter."

"I thought that he was a man very proud of keeping his word. If my memory serve me rightly, he promised to come himself."

"He did, madam. But he never neglects business, and this task he thought could be better undertaken by me."

"Why better?"

"He thought that you might wish to know about Zach's peculiarities—his ways and that, if he was to stop."

She looked very anxiously toward Mrs. Henwood, then lowered her eyes, as though dazzled by the diamonds.

"Of course he is to stop."

"Father and I were thinking—"

"Never mind that. I have company here to-night, and can not stay to hear what your thoughts—your father's—"

were, my good woman. This boy stops! You should be grateful, both you and this boy should be grateful for the interest I take in him."

"I hope we are," murmured Polly Wynn.

"I will make a gentleman of him."

Zach looked at her nervously—her presence there awed him, at least. The brightness of the new world was bewildering him already.

"You must not trouble this boy by any letters, presents, any thing to remind him of his low estate—I want him to forget it. You must not expect to see him at any time, or at any place, but be thankful for the means afforded you, which gave him a chance to rise in life. Only a chance, boy," she said, turning to him, "for if you prove ungrateful for all the trouble that I take from this day—for all the money I shall spend upon you—why, I cast you back again. I—I have been talked into this—and am not quite certain of the wisdom of this step. That boy's looks I don't like much. Why should I be troubled by him!"

"I wish that we might—" began Polly.

"There—there, I have told you that I have not time for any conversation," she said. "Do you want any money? Is there any thing to pay for that brat? What is his price—or yours?"

"Zach has always paid his way, Mrs. Henwood," said Polly, flinching very much at the vehemence of the lady, "we don't want any money, in return for our care for him. We are sorry to part with him—he was all that could be wished, until thoughts of coming here unsettled him a bit. You don't see him at his best now."

"I do not think that I need detain you any longer," said Mrs. Henwood; "stay, there is one question I would ask."

Polly Wynn waited quietly for it.

"This boy's father—are you ever likely to see him?"

"To see Zach's father—I hope never, ma'am!"

"You can not take my message, or my warning to him, then. That is very inconvenient."

"He will not trouble you concerning Zach, now."

"I will lock him up if he do, the ruffian," said Mrs. Henwood. "You never see him, then?" she added suspiciously.

"Surely not!"

"We thought, up at the house, years ago, that you were

going to marry him. It was talked about, and it threw us off our guard, and led to mischief and disgrace. Dear, dear!—why didn't you?—it would have been so much the better."

"For your family," added Polly, a little more firmly, "but not for mine. Before I lie down at night, I thank God now that I escaped him."

"Then you—"

"Then, I liked him once—when he was a very different man, and led me on to think of him. But that was long ago!"

"Ah! it seems a long while," said Mrs. Henwood; "but if you had only married Mr. Fernwell, what a good thing it would have been! What a deal of trouble it would have saved, too. I think, my good woman, you can go now. I do not call to mind any thing else that I have to say. Your brother—will he stay long in Paris?"

"Not longer than a fortnight, madam."

"He is a lucky man to be so much in request in two countries."

"Stanley and Burns send him to their branch house; they are very fond of Martin. He is the first in his trade, ma'am, and if ever a man deserved—"

"Really, I don't think I need detain you any longer."

Polly rose, and caught Zach suddenly round the neck with both arms, affectionately garroting him.

"Don't forget me, Zach!—don't forget the prayers I taught you in the hope of you turning better, and growing good like. Try and keep good always—that's better than keeping rich, or any thing! You'll find it hard at first still; but you won't mind—you'll do your best."

"I can't understand this sentiment," said Mrs. Henwood; "it's very foolish and very unnatural in you—a woman with her bread to earn. I think all this must be, even now, for the sake of the man who jilted you."

"P'r'aps so," said Polly; "I wouldn't like the boy to grow up like the father, or the father to have to answer for the boy's sins as well as his own. And this boy is a something very odd; there's good in him, there's gratitude, there's lots of things, if you'll only try to bring 'em to the light. Oh! you will, ma'am, for your sister's sake."

"Hush!—don't talk to me of that sinful woman," said

Mrs. Henwood, fiercely; "in her grave I have not forgiven the disgrace she sought to cast upon me. You should know better—you should have more respect for me—than to mention her name in this house. Have you done with the boy?"

"Ye-es."

She embraced Zach again, and Zach flung his arms round her suddenly; he had remained very stolid until the last moment, then he kissed her passionately.

"I wish I'd sarved you better," he said; "I wish I had to begin agin, all over agin, with nobody atween us!"

"You see—you hear," said Polly to Mrs. Henwood, appealing to the lady to witness the good there was in Zach.

Zach dropped his arms to his side, and became reserved once more.

"I really don't think that I will detain you any longer, Miss Wynn," repeated Mrs. Henwood.

Polly courtesied, and after one more look at Zach withdrew. The servant led her along the hall, and showed her out of the front door, before which were five or six carriages waiting to bear the diners-out to their respective homes.

"Martin thinks it for the best—father thinks it for the best—both cleverer than *me*—so much more cleverer!" she said; "but I don't see the good of it all—I never shall, p'r'aps."

Reminiscences of her past interview, of some bitter words spoken therein, also appeared to trouble Polly Wynn. She stopped to consider them when the great swing gate had clanked behind her, and she was on the high road, with her face turned Londonward.

"For the sake of the man who jilted me!" said Miss Wynn, almost indignantly. "She knew all about it, then; she's pleased to recollect me sometimes, when it's handy to remember things. Well, p'r'aps it was for his sake as I knew him last before he proved himself a villain—as I saw him last. What came afterward is neither here nor there, and that boy was like *his* father in the face—uncommon like at times. Well, let's get on, Polly; it's all turned out for the best. I'm a lucky woman, and a thankful one. With Zach off my mind—and he worried me, because I couldn't make him out—I ought to feel more happy than I do. Oh! I should be very, very happy, if I could be sure that Zach

would keep straight in the big house that's swallowed him up!"

Meanwhile Mrs. Henwood "going in" for philanthropy and popularity, had taken Zach Fernwell into the drawing-room, surrounded him by the guests, and introduced him as "the little hero." Zach was very shy in company; he even looked inclined to resent the favors heaped upon him, and very sullenly put forth his hand to be shaken by enthusiastic visitors.

"What a mind to conceive so admirable a plan to baffle crime!" said one old gentleman; "I should train that mind very carefully—lead it by its own bias, as it were, to something great."

"Looks like a hero, the little dear!" said a lady to Mrs. Henwood.

"Looks as if he had stolen something!" muttered one of the young wholesalers to a bosom friend.

"I wish Mrs. Henwood well out of her new scheme."

"She's a queer fish."

"And this is a queer freak. I wonder what the patroness will think of her bargain this time ten years?"

You and I, dear reader, waiting patiently for the end of the prologue, and seeing the elements of danger in our story proper, may wonder, also, with the rest of them.

CHAPTER V.

TEDDY AT HOME.

DRAG'S COURT, Seven Dials, was not a respectable thoroughfare. In the night-time, a place to be shunned by decent folk, and scarcely safe for the police, unless they ran in couples like greyhounds, and had friends within an easy distance; in the daytime as hideous, loathsome, and repellent "a slum" as ever a parish took pains to keep sacred. A famous place for the Irish in all seasons; for the wild Irish, with little to do but fight with the fire-irons and threaten the life of the rent-man—the middle-man, when he clamored too much for his half a crown a week; a rare haunt for the professional beggars, the blind man who could see, and the cripples who danced jigs after business hours;

a place of retreat for young men and women who were "inquired for," because the police objected to a quarrelsome place, where no one cared to go away quietly or see others be taken quietly; not a locality very much patronized by the members of the knavish fraternity, for there was always a "fuss" there, and there was not a mite of comfort to be found from Number One to Number Thirty-six, but a rare school for beginners—for "young uns" who had not come out, and had nothing against them *as yet*; even a refuge for despairing honesty occasionally, honesty that could not live, and so sought this out-of-the-way corner to die by inches, with nobody the wiser, till the coroner sat upon the body, and returned the usual verdict of "Justifiable Starvation, under Unjustifiable Circumstances."

At Number Seven, Drag's Court, there resided Teddy Fernwell, the boy whose shadow has fallen across these pages now and then. We look in upon him on that Wednesday evening when Martin Wynn had promised to call with the latest news concerning his brother Zach. Teddy was at home, on the ground, or rather the underground floor—not alone in his retreat, however, for he shared that select apartment with an old woman who went on crutches, and sold kettle-holders, and two youths of about his own age, dealers in lucifer-matches, and in things that came handy! This limited liability company paid eighteen-pence a week for the cellarage, contenting itself with the faint light that shimmered through the grating in the stones, and poking at the legs of aborigines when they blocked up the supply by standing in the way.

Teddy Fernwell had had his usual run of high spirits that day, and "at home" and in his glory, Teddy was always at his best. He did not confine himself to his own apartments, but had the run of the premises, and a word to say to all the occupants, from the cellar which he inhabited to the top story, where a woman made boots night and day, nursed a baby, and took another in to nurse. Teddy, who had migrated a few weeks since from Whitechapel, had been long enough in Drag's Court however to make friends with the majority of its occupants; he had a way with him that was generally appreciated, and among his own set was considered "the best of company." He knew all the street songs in vogue, was clever at solo dances, great in

slang, possessed a fine knowledge of the streets, and could take his own part in any quarrel that was likely—and it was very likely—to turn up. He had not been in luck's way lately, but his spirits had not given way much; he had had a quarrel with his father—a long and desperate quarrel—but he had come to Drag's Court whistling the last popular melody; nothing had occurred to put money in his purse; nor had he sought to put it there after a reckless mood of his at times that was aggravating to "the school," but his spirits had never flagged; and only at nine o'clock on that Wednesday evening did he suddenly take to staring very intently at the rushlight, flickering its way toward its socket in the medicine-bottle on the table.

Teddy was sitting on the corner of the table—there were no chairs in Teddy's apartment, only one large stone, and on that Mrs. Jones, the old lady before alluded to, landlady of the establishment, and general manager of the company—was ensconced, her hands round her knees, her crutches within easy distance, her kettle-holders still hanging round her neck. Mrs. Jones was smoking a short clay pipe, and interested in Teddy's abstracted *posae*. The other lodgers were out; they had gone to the gallery of the Queen's Theatre, and were not expected home till twelve.

"What's the matter, Teddy?" asked the old woman at last.

"Nothink."

"Why don't yer sing a song, or somethink?" she suggested; "it isn't comfurable to come home after a hard day's work, and see yer staring there. It isn't like yer—it isn't as if I hadn't treated yer well."

"All right," said Teddy.

"Yer ain't a fretting about yer father, I s'pose—that was a flare-up and no mistake, I hear. I can't see why yer interfered atween him and the kid—it's allers better not to interfere with nuffink."

"P'r'aps so," said Teddy.

"Why don't yer go out and see what's on in the Dials?"

"I'm not a-going out to-night."

"Jackson's got a trial on to-night down the court—why ain't you counsel for the persecution?"

"Don't care about it."

"I never larfed so much in all my life as when you come

that speech about the willany and wickedness of the pris'ner at the bar. If you'd been double yer age, yer couldn't have done it better."

"I should spile their sport to-night, Mother Jones," said Teddy, yawning. "I think I'll run up stairs and see how O'Reilly's getting on."

"O'Reilly's young uns are as full of fever as ever they can stick—I can't see the good of going there. Yer was there this arternoon."

"Ah! doing the nussing too," said Teddy with a sudden laugh; "you should have seen me walk about the babby till it went to sleep—I'm proud of the twist I've got with them things—they can't stand it, bless you."

Teddy revived a little, and leaped off the table.

"Yer as restless as a fly," grumbled the woman; "yer'll be any where, and talk to any body but me, who's been a mother to yer. I'm a blessed good mind to try the double-up dodge agin in the Strand, than sit here and be made miserable."

"I'll be down agin in a minit or two," said he; "don't go out to-night in the wet, with them boots and that cough. You can't stand wet, I know."

"Well, well, come down and sing somefink, then, Teddy."

"Yes—presently—sing like a robin!"

Teddy was evidently restless—far from himself. He went up stairs and looked in at O'Reilly—O'Reilly in the first floor, an Irishman out of work, and with a wife and family to support—O'Reilly with scarlet fever in the house and no bread.

The O'Reillys were glad to see Teddy again. Hungry, penniless, and in sore affliction, still the face of a friend who spoke cheerfully was worth seeing and welcoming. Character was no object with the O'Reillys; when they had dropped to Drag's Court, they dropped all thought of decorum; Drag's Court the last stage of self-dependence, after that the glorious Union! No one who lived in Drag's Court was ever in luck's way; even Seven-Dials folk looked down upon the denizens of Drag's; the latter were people to be pitied; even thieves out of luck became objects of commiseration there.

Teddy remained with the O'Reillys about a quarter of an hour, offering his advice to the head of the house respecting

certain works in progress, and that he had noted during his desultory strolls, and thought O'Reilly might find a job upon; talking to the mother about the young ones, and the parish doctor who was coming in the morning; and trying to amuse the young ones—lying in a heap on the floor—by feigning to take their medicine, and making wry faces after his imaginary doses. Then Teddy went to the back room and found another lodger; discoursed on the prospects of the coming summer season—Epsom Races and Ascot, the last prize-fight, and the "mill" coming off next week; becoming fidgety after a while, and ascending the next flight of stairs in search of farther distraction. He descended at last, weary enough to all appearances, went into Drag's Court, and looked anxiously up that charming thoroughfare. The place was resonant with noise that May night; they were singing and laughing over the way; they were fighting three doors off, and there was an Irish wake at the last house. It was raining in Drag's Court—a close fine rain, that rendered things misty and the evening uninviting.

"I never thought he'd come," muttered Teddy; "I don't know that I ever wanted him to come. What's the odds of it?"

Unable to calculate the odds, Teddy walked bareheaded and with his hands in his pockets to the entrance of the court, and looked up and down the wider street. Teddy knew every body, despite his short residence in the Dials; there was a nod or a few words about the weather, a lively interchange of personalities with every passer-by; he would have seemed quite at home and at his ease there, had it not been for his quick glances right and left.

"He's afraid to come, on second thoughts," muttered Teddy once more, "afraid of getting his feet wet—or p'r'aps he's lent his umbrella to 'blige a lady, and can't come out till it's brought back agin. I don't care about him—I never said I did. What's the odds?"

Entering into calculations on the odds again, he went back to Drag's Court, and dived into his cellar, as a wolf-cub might dive into his lair. He found Mrs. Jones still smoking.

"Yer call this a minit, I s'pose?"

"Don't be cross, old gal. I'll sing you the finest song I have in stock to make up."

"I don't want to hear no singing now."

"Then I think I'll go to bed. Tell those chaps not to make too much row when they come in."

Teddy flung himself into a corner of the cellar, crossed his arms on his chest, and tried to sleep; tried very hard, but failed, owing to a headache, a sore throat, and a pain at the back of his eyes.

"I s'pose Zach's off by this time," he said, after a while; and the woman at the other end of the room asked him querulously what he was grumbling about now.

"About your smoke," he answered; "I don't like it to-night, somehow—it's awful strong—don't you think you have had enuf of it?"

The woman took her pipe from her mouth, to laugh at this—to screech with laughter like a night-hawk; Teddy complaining of tobacco-smoke was a joke worth registering. She knew that something had gone wrong with Teddy—he was not inclined to be particular—what was it now?

Teddy declined to confess to any thing wrong, and after a while dropped off to sleep—to a restless and broken sleep, that irritated the woman who had curled herself, crutches and kettle-holders, into her allotted corner, where she sat like a witch, whom Martin Hopkins would have been glad to "drop on" some two hundred and fifty years ago. Presently the lodgers returning and lighting up again; then a slight dispute between them about a "chance" that had been lost; finally, the light out, and the new-comers lying like dogs along the floor. Teddy woke up in the night and asked for water—he remembered that—remembered groping his way out of the cellar in search of it, and coming back giddy and sick, and sitting for a while on the stairs outside his den, wondering whether he was going to be ill to-morrow. He had not been "flush" of money, or had much to eat lately; he must "go to business" to-morrow, find something quietly, or get locked up for finding it too clumsily. It was no good going on like that any more. He hadn't done any thing for himself since he had called on Martin Wynn—he didn't know for what reason, but he hadn't felt inclined. The Wynns had lost him work—"a sight of work!"—they were a queer lot, from the old watchman to that chap in Tottenham Court Road. And they were precious liars, too, some of them; he remembered feeling vexed

with them suddenly, before he staggered back to his place in the cellar and lay down again. After that nothing to be remembered distinctly for a long while—for how long, it was difficult to say; but the daylight came and went through the grating many times, and every thing was strange, confused, unreal. They were playing music close to his ears—such odd tunes!—when he wanted to sleep; and the old woman with the crutches kept him down when he wished to get up; and it perplexed him to comprehend why he was not strong enough to cope with her, and even made him cry. Teddy had caught the O'Reilly fever, he knew afterward; his fellow-lodgers, afraid of fever, had gone farther down the court; but Mrs. Jones, who was fever-proof, held fast and did her best, neglecting business to nurse him through it. In the face of every difficulty—want of fresh air, proper nourishment, fair attendance—Teddy fought through the fever, coming out at the end of the contest as weak as a child, too weak to leave the corner in which the battle had taken place, and where the terrible battle against the exhaustion was yet to be fought. The parish doctor had done his best for him; had even recommended him into the House, and would have had him taken into the House, had it not been for Mrs. Jones asserting on oath that she was Teddy's mother, and able to support him—that she didn't want any interference, and she knew—nobody better—“what the workus was, and how they nussed people out of the world on beds two sizes too small for 'em, and shook 'em by the throat when they fancied any thing to eat that wasn't in the rules.”

Teddy was an object of interest in Drag's Court, and there were many inquiries concerning him. He was missed by his contemporaries; and as the fever left him, there was a difficulty in keeping all his friends from calling upon him at once, and killing him with company. O'Reilly came in for a job, at last, and sent down a red herring and half a cup of whisky, with his compliments, on the first Saturday night he touched “wages;” and though Teddy was a little feverish still, and disinclined for the comestibles, they came in handy for Mrs. Jones, though they made her “drefful thusty.”

Presently there found his way into the cellar a loud-voiced, earnest, blundering kind of being, with his heart in the right

place, but his brains in the wrong, who attacked the invalid on the subject of his moral condition, and preached of eternal punishment in all its branches, saying nothing of hope for the penitent, but a trifle too much concerning the fate of all sinners.

Teddy scarcely understood what a sinner was, and therefore the missionary failed in arousing his patient's interest; he would come again, the missionary said—he was a man who never flinched from the work to his hand, and he feared nothing. Teddy could not make it out very clearly; he had seen the man before in Drag's Court—once chased by the Irish, whom he attacked concerning their tenets—and he did not see the good of being preached at, and told how his actions were to be rewarded. He could not alter his life—no one would trust him, or help him. He was too old, also, for any change—he was not like his brother Zach. Zach had been in his thoughts during his fever-time; the old woman told him afterward that he had called out several times for Zach, and once shrieked to her to take his father out of the cellar and brain him with her crutches; and there had been a dim consciousness of a house in Upper Ground Street, with a little woman telling him to leave her room, which became suddenly full of odd pieces of furniture, with Martin Wynn, and a bright-faced child in their midst, looking at him with an interest which he had never seen in human nature hitherto.

He was only strong enough to sit with his back against the wall for half an hour a day, when a visitor whom he did not expect—whom he thought was many miles away from Drag's Court—descended into the cellar. A round-shouldered man of middle height, with a white face and goat's-hair eyebrows.

"So this is the place you have hidden yourself in, Teddy?" he said, as he entered, and after bowing politely to the landlady. "You see I can manage to find you out when it suits me."

"Here agin," said Teddy, sullenly. "You might let me be. I've had enough of you. I won't go with you no more!"

"You hear him!" he said, appealing to the landlady. "This is my own son—a boy whom I have worked for all my life."

"I wouldn't bother him now; he's got a fever."

"Eh?"

Mr. Fernwell moved a step or two back from Teddy with considerable alacrity. He was a man evidently afraid of fever.

"Oh! I'm all right now," said Teddy. "I shall be right enuf in a day or two, Mrs. Jones."

"You can't get right in this hole—you had no business to come here," said Mr. Fernwell, "when you had a father to take care of you."

"No, I ain't," said Teddy, doggedly.

"I am disposed, Teddy," said Fernwell, in an insinuating voice, "to let the past die out, and overlook our former disagreements. You did not treat me well—you ought not to have interfered between me and Zach; you lost me and yourself hundreds by your foolery."

"I wanted Zach to stop there. I would have him stop."

"You nearly got me transported. Don't you think of that? A son turning against—*peaching* against—his own father. Great heaven! what will the world come to next?"

"I told you what I'd do—I did it!"

"Well, I have not come here, Teddy, to quarrel about it any more," he said, "on the contrary, to make friends, and begin again when we can. I have an idea for making our fortunes, my boy—yours and mine together."

Teddy shook his head. He was very pale, but very firm.

"Never no more!" he repeated, faintly. "I said if ever you hit me agin, I'd cut it. I've done so."

"But you hit me back, didn't you?"

"You get rich by yourself, father, and leave me alone."

"My dear Teddy, you will die in this place."

"I wish I could. I want to die off comfurably; I've been trying to. I don't see the good o' keeping as I am. I'm tired of you, tired of life, tired of every think, and if I could be left alone to go off quietly, all by myself here, I should be so werry glad!"

"Well, I must look up little Zach again, then," murmured Mr. Fernwell. "I can't be without both my children—it is not natural."

From his shaggy eyebrows Mr. Fernwell watched the effect of this indirect threat upon the sick boy in the corner.

He was a man who had studied human nature, and knew its weak places, and how to strike at them.

Teddy's eyes dilated. "No, you can't get hold of Zach now. He's safe at last."

"Is he?" said Mr. Fernwell. "I'll just convince you to the contrary, my dear Edward. Are you listening?"

"Yes."

He was listening with his soul in his face, and Mr. Fernwell, seeing his advantage, leaned his back against the wall most remote from his fever-stricken son, and proceeded to make known his future intentions.

CHAPTER VI.

FERNWELL AND SON.

MR. FERNWELL, watchful of results, a trifle nervous concerning the fever, even somewhat nervous concerning noises on the stairs, and what they portended in his rear, proceeded to impress his son with the conviction of his power over all opposed to him.

Standing there in the misty daylight that had found its way through the grating in Drag's Court, he no more resembled a man of power, than he resembled the handsome, clever Mr. Fernwell who had done much mischief sixteen-years ago. He was the picture of a scamp; a man who had gone edgewise through life, never presenting a full front to the world, but sidling along in the shadows, hunting for his prey, and more dangerous—like other animals—when driven to his last resource.

Fernwell, the tramp, might be looked upon as a desperate man at the present time; for he was short of money, short of friends, and in one or two pet schemes "to realize," he had been lately balked. Add to this that he was on the black list of detective officers, and that the force would be glad to learn his "whereabouts," and Mr. Fernwell's condition of mind may be considered as far from tranquil. Still he looked tranquil; it was his boast that he could meet the ills of life with composure, and he tried hard to keep up an appearance even to himself. His contemporaries had flattered him by calling him "the cool card," and he had let the

name stick to him through life as an appellative in difficult circumstances; only drink threw him off his guard, and made him more of the bully than the philosopher. Mr. Fernwell was as sober as a judge at that time.

"Now, Teddy," he said, "I ask your polite attention. You are aware that a certain lady of our acquaintance has obtained possession of my younger son. Contrary to law this, in the first place, and rendering that lady subject to considerable damages for robbing a parent of his child in the second. You are listening?"

"Yes."

"I hope you understand. It often distresses me to think that my theory of the education of youth may have rendered you *too* stupid. Education did me harm, for it made me over-clever; and I thought that I would bring up my children in a different fashion, fancying that my plan would make you and your brother obedient at least."

He had thought that the more ignorant he kept those boys, the better tools to work with they would remain through life. He had studied deeply the art of reducing their minds to the lowest level of humanity, looking forward to the day when his two children would be profitable to him. He was a great rascal; for he had planned and struggled for their abasement, as other men strive for the advancement of their offspring. He knew that he should never rise himself; that the scales fell too heavily in his disfavor; that he was a tramp, a thief, and a ruffian, and would remain so to the end; therefore he resented the world's verdict by training up his children to all that was ignoble, confident in their future help in those undertakings that his cunning might conceive. The boys had turned out sharp enough, but scarcely as obedient as he could have wished. There was the mother's obduracy predominant at times; and as he had been mistaken in the mother, so might he be in the children, if he did not watch them carefully, he thought. Then had followed the mother's resolution to save Zach from the parent's teaching; a terrible quarrel, several blows, and a separation by consent of both parties. After this, Mr. Fernwell and Teddy doing their best, or worst together—never in luck's way to any great extent, and meeting with misfortune very often. Finally, Mr. Fernwell a widower, and the complications of our story,

and of his family arrangements, commencing with that night when the woman from the better days died at Henwood's Wharf.

"Now, I am not afraid of Mrs. Henwood," said Mr. Fernwell; "or of confronting her and demanding Zach back. And I am inclined to think that, with all her money, all her position, all her high-flying, my son, I have a hold upon her." Teddy had nothing to respond to this. He was too weak to enter into argument; his mind was made up to one thing, and he was clinging fast to that. That was all he thoroughly comprehended just then.

"She is one of the few whom I hate intensely—gloriously," said Mr. Fernwell, rubbing one thin hand over the other; "she has stood a good deal in my way at one time and another, and I bear her in remembrance. She would no more dare to avow the disgrace of her connection with me, or refuse to pay me money for my silence, than she would dare to ask me to her dinner-parties. But I need not dwell upon all this with you. Only understand that I can have Zach back with me to-morrow if I like, and that I will have him back to his old life with me, so help me God, Teddy!"

Mr. Fernwell was less cool and philosophical when he took that bitter oath than he had been heretofore. Teddy paled a little at the intensity of feeling evident in his father's peroration; he was not so strong as he could wish, and a demonstration of force in others had its effect upon him.

"What do you want with me?"

"I'll tell you when you're stronger—when you come to me."

"Where are you hanging out now?"

Mr. Fernwell glanced suspiciously at the old beggar-woman.

"Oh! at the old place. They will always tell you at the old place where I am to be found."

"And if I come, you'll drop Zach?"

"You're not so sharp as he is—not so quick quite," said Mr. Fernwell; "but you're better company—older and stronger altogether. Yes, I'll drop him!"

"I never meant to come no more near you," said Teddy; "but I s'pose it doesn't matter to me—who minds?"

"Why, no one, to be sure."

"I ain't likely to grow good, or find people to take care

of me," said Teddy; "and if you don't put upon me any more, I may come back. These are hard lines enuf, and can't be wus."

"You have no fine ideas about turning out a Christian?—it's all humbug, Teddy, to suppose one man is better than another. We are all alike, only the rich people have got the start of us, and have no occasion to look out for themselves. They know well enough that every body *must* live."

"Ah!" said Teddy, listlessly.

"And if they will not help us, why, we *must* help ourselves. The thing is plain enough—I've explained it to you half a dozen times before."

"Ah! yes; it's plain," replied Teddy.

"If I had been more nimble on my pins," broke in the beggar-woman here, "I mightn't have been satisfied with kittle-holders. I never thove myself, because I couldn't get away clear arterwards, and because I did somehow arout it. If we could do arout it, all the better," said the woman, suddenly assuming a moral tone; "if Teddy could, I'd be glad enuf, for Teddy's a good sort, and ought to be better off altogether. But if we can't, then what's the good o' thinking twice on it. Ain't we hunted down enuf by every body, I should like to know? Ain't we shoved about, and moved on, and scuffled under foot, the lot on us, who ain't respectable?"

"I don't quite follow your charming line of argument," said Mr. Fernwell; "but it's true enough, no doubt. And Teddy's a good sort—I agree with you there. It is for that reason that I look over much that is objectionable in Teddy. He don't bear any one a grudge, and though I shall be never able to understand his actions of last month, or why he turned against me like a—like a young devil as he was, still I appreciate—no one better than I—the good points in his character. Can I speak more fair, Teddy?"

"No."

"In my own opinion, Teddy, I am inclined to think that Zach had better stay with his new friends, and work his way to independence. When he's rich—which he may be, for Mrs. Henwood's fool enough to make him rich some day—why, he'll be of more use to you and me than he is now."

"We'll leave the little chap alone," said Teddy, doggedly, "always to keep away from him!"

"As you please. We shall have many opportunities of discussing that question. When will you be strong enough to leave here?"

"I don't know."

"It's very inconvenient just now, you being laid up like this. When you can walk, I shall want you to— May I ask where you are going, my dear madam?"

Mrs. Jones had risen, taken up her crutches, and was proceeding to withdraw, when Mr. Fernwell came with alacrity between her and the door.

"I'm going out."

"A few minutes, please," he said, "and I shall be gone myself. I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance; and though I put every confidence in you, still it would be obliging me to remain where you are for the present."

"They ain't any money offered for yer, is there?" asked Mrs. Jones, "that yer so 'tickler."

"I don't care to be known or seen just now."

"I won't say a word. I ain't the sort."

"Stop where you are, woman," Mr. Fernwell said with less politeness as she once more made a movement in advance. "Sit down again, will you. I let no one pass out here till I have gone myself."

"Will you let any one pass in?" inquired a voice at the door.

Mr. Fernwell jumped, then assumed his usual equable demeanor, and moved aside to allow of the ingress of the speaker. Teddy gave a stifled cry, fell forward on his hands, and looked hard at the new-comer.

"Is it you, sir? Why, you ain't come to see me, arter all? You ain't been and come here for that?"

"To see you—and to help you, if you'll let me."

Teddy struggled back into his old position; Martin Wynn, marqueterie-worker, turned to address Mr. Fernwell, who was leaning against the wall with his hands in his pockets. Mrs. Jones, who had returned to the fire, suddenly lighted up the scene by placing a rushlight on the table, an addition to the decorations at which Mr. Fernwell scowled. He had never liked too much light on his actions, but still he was equal to the emergency. He was a clever

man, with his wits in the right place. He turned to Martin Wynn with celerity.

"What's your name, sir, and your business, and where do you work? You must give an account of yourself—I'm Driver—Scotland Yard. You know well enough?" he added with a nod.

The voice had changed, the face had changed; it was a clever piece of acting for an impromptu performance, but Martin Wynn was prepared for it.

"I thought you were Fernwell, of Whitechapel, at first. It's a striking likeness."

"Oh! is it?"

"I don't forget faces very often, let them alter as they will—and yours has altered very terribly, Richard Fernwell, since I saw it down in Warwickshire. We were younger men by sixteen years."

"An excellent memory," said Mr. Fernwell with a laugh. "Supposing that I am the man, what then?"

"I have no wish to detain you now. I am *not* from Scotland Yard, sir."

"To detain me, were I disposed to value my liberty, or consider it imperiled, would be to risk your life, *mon ami*," said Mr. Fernwell, stealing his hand into the breast-pocket of his coat.

"I risk my life every day," was the somewhat enigmatical response; "and I shall not be afraid to arrest you, when I see the necessity for the action. At present I do not."

"Lucky for you."

"Before the interview is over I may."

The hand that had been stealing away from the breast-pocket returned to it with decision, and remained there for a while. The face of Richard Fernwell set hard and cold and defiant; the man to risk all and to dare all. He placed himself in a position more convenient to his own comfort, crossed one leg over the other, and said,

"I await your pleasure, Martin Wynn."

He never forgot faces also; years had no more weakened his memory than Martin's. He was a man who treasured every thing. After many years they met in that close, stifling den—the good and evil genius of Teddy Fernwell—to do battle for a soul.

CHAPTER VII.

GOOD AND EVIL.

"You have been ill?" said Martin turning to the large-eyed, white-faced lad heaped in the corner of the cellar; "you are ill now."

"I have had a touch of the fever, Mr. Wynn — but I'm better."

"And no one ever stood a fever like that Teddy there!" chimed in the old woman. "I can say that for him among t'other things. He took it just as if he liked it."

"It didn't hurt," muttered Teddy.

"I could not keep my word to call upon you," explained Martin. "I had a duty to fulfill to my employers, whose orders, while I am their servant, stand first to be obeyed. In my hurry, even, to tell you the truth, I forgot you."

"Very likely, sir," said Teddy, with a feeble smile; "it didn't matter."

"Yes, it did—I was in the wrong."

"You couldn't have done no good by coming here," said Teddy.

"You expected me?"

"Just a little, at fust—on'y at fust like."

"I have been thinking about you a great deal, Teddy," said Martin, after a moment's pause, "thinking how hard it was—how strange it seemed—for one brother to have every chance offered to amend his life, and for the door of hope to be shut, as it were, in the face of the other."

"Teddy will not comprehend allegory, Mr. Wynn," said Fernwell, breaking in here. "I would have put it a trifle more plainly to him, had I been in your place. You will excuse the interruption?"

"I think he understands," said Martin, without looking in the direction of the speaker. "What do you say, Teddy?"

"I make it out, sir," replied the lad; "but I don't see—"

"Ah! that comes presently," interrupted Martin; "patience, I think you will. In traveling to France with my

little girl, I thought a great deal of you—thinking of you the more for breaking my word—and coming back again, I talked about you to Christie a great deal; asking her advice, and seeing with her the chance to alter you. Not to raise you to a level with your brother's position, but to make you honest and true."

"Ho—oh!" croaked Teddy, "that's a good un, that is. Lor' bless you, sir, I ain't got a chance—I've said so afore—it's too late for any one to trust a cove."

"I'll trust you."

Teddy stared for a while over Martin's head; he did not look him in the face; the fingers—long and attenuated with his illness—cracked as he interlaced them nervously together. He found a voice at last, found a laugh, too, somewhere about him, and indulged in it.

"That's a good 'un too," he repeated. "Lor' bless you, sir, I couldn't do it. I ain't got the pluck—I ain't got the strength—I ain't never learnt to keep my hands from picking up things on the quiet. You know what I am—ask any body in Drag's Court what I am, sir."

"I will trust you."

Teddy's fingers cracked again.

"I'm an old prison-bird, and every body knows me—there isn't a policeman, this side of the water, or the t'other, that doesn't keep a hi on me when I'm on the look-out. I'm like Jack Shepherd, sir!"

"I will trust you," said Martin Wynn, for the third time; and "Oh! that is a good un!" said Teddy Fernwell, once more in reply.

"Teddy, you would not rob me, if I took you into my service, taught you a trade—my trade—and made an apprentice of you. Come, now, would you rob me, to begin with?"

"No," said Teddy, sullenly.

"Then come to my house—I shall be glad to see you."

Teddy's only response was the cracking of his fingers again—he hung his head more upon his chest, which labored very strangely. It was a great temptation to turn away from evil, and try to grow up like Zach; but the faith in himself was not there, and he could not believe in man's trust in him.

"You would not be afraid of hard work?" said Martin Wynn.

"Not likely."

"It is hard work to give up evil, and learn to walk uprightly before men and your God. Don't shun that work—don't be a coward!" said Martin.

"What—what do *you* say?" asked Teddy, suddenly looking toward his father. "You know best what I am."

"I don't care for his opinion," said Martin.

"Still it is called for," Mr. Fernwell remarked, coolly, "and it is the opinion of a man of the world, like yourself. I ask you, Mr. Wynn, to give up troubling a boy, almost sick unto death, with your suggestions. You would not find a grateful pupil in Teddy; you would begin to preach at him and bully him; you would be ever watching him, lest he should steal your money, your tools, your time; you would find that he was too old for change, and that every fellow whom he met would sneer at his efforts to be any better than he is. Why, his life with you would be a curse, sir—he would be watched from door to door by the police; every man and woman to whom he spoke, or to whom he was sent, would be warned of his past life; he would meet his old pals, and be seized upon for consorting with them; he would be tried and locked up again for being in suspicious company; he would find no happiness any where, or any how, in that hard, cold, religious world, to which you would consign him."

Mr. Fernwell spoke with great energy, and Teddy listened attentively. He saw the life which his father drew, and shuddered at it. It was what he feared; what he knew beforehand.

"You would keep him a thief?" said Martin.

"I would keep him with me," replied Fernwell; "we have been unfortunate together, and we will remain together to the last. If you could do any good," he added magnanimously, "I would not—lonely as I am—make one effort to stop you; but I know what a fool's task it is to keep honest in the face of a world that distrusts you."

"Did you try to keep honest?"

"I did. I found plenty of preachers—but no friends. Believers in the Gospel, but not in *me*. I lost my clerkship, and—went adrift, sir. The wreck that you see before you is all that is left of an honest man."

"You were never honest," said Martin sternly. "You

were always untruthful, studying to deceive others, working at your own plans in the dark, and scheming for yourself. Had that boy the perception that should be natural to him, he would take you for his moral."

"The boy understands me—you don't."

"Almost sick unto death," said Martin, quoting the previous words of Richard Fernwell as he turned to Teddy, "supposing that you had died."

"Ah!" said Mr. Fernwell, assuming his indolent attitude again, "now for the talk appropriate to the occasion—the king of terrors, the bottomless pit, and the teeth-gnashing accompaniments. Try that on him as the 'next little article.' Are you ready for a sermon, Teddy?"

"If you had died," said Martin Wynn very earnestly, "died in this sin at which your father sneers, and left me powerless to act for you, I should have been sorry."

"Why?—you!"

"I should have lost my chance of saving you."

Teddy laughed again—more feebly and hollowly than ever.

"I've been thinking of that *dodge*—talking of it, afore today. I think over it a good deal just now."

"Well?" said Martin anxiously.

"I don't see the good o' my stopping—I don't want to be any wus, and I must if I get up agin. I don't feel as if I was afeared to shut my eyes and go off *any where they like!* I couldn't have done any better nor I had—I didn't know!"

"Knowing now more than you are aware, for God's sake, give yourself one trial. My poor boy, in that humility of yours, I see beyond such hope for you! I ask you to think of the better life which you may lead from this day."

"I'm a sight too old, Mr. Wynn. It's werry kind o' you, but it can't be done."

"So hard as this—and yet so young!" moaned Martin.

"All this is an odd freak of yours," said Mr. Fernwell; "pardon me if I add, an intrusion upon our domestic arrangements perfectly uncalled for. I can not comprehend this noble disinterested family of the Wynns—people running about to see with whom they can hamper themselves, and taking an intense amount of trouble and future mortification to themselves, in order to render every body else un-

comfortable. We Fernwells are forever indebted to your eccentric race, but we must protest—a little—on so studied an interference with us."

Mr. Fernwell made a low bow, and worked his bushy gray eyebrows at a rapid rate. Martin Wynn regarded him unmoved—the shafts of the thief's satire pattered harmlessly against his coat of mail.

"I knew your wife when she was an impulsive girl, foolish and romantic, but good, and generous, and truthful. You were a knave then, and led her wrong; you schemed for a fortune with her, and missing it, missing all support from unforgiving parents—God has forgiven them their hardness, I trust—you sank swiftly and suddenly to evil, dragging your wife down with you. You went wholly bad, and I dispute your right to any claim upon your children."

"What you dispute does not affect me, Mr. Wynn, any more than your reproaches."

"You have forfeited all claim to your children. Confessing, as you do, a fixed intention to make this boy's life a copy of your own, I am here to say that it sha'n't be!"

"There you are, losing your temper, and talking more illogically in consequence," said Mr. Fernwell. "How will you help it?"

"I will give this boy a fair chance—untrammelled by your advice, direct from the fiend's as it is. I will shut you up as I would a wild beast. Justice is looking for you, and I will aid her in the search. I hand you over to the police to-night."

Martin Wynn turned to Richard Fernwell as he spoke—towering above him with his hands clenched, and his face flushed with honest anger, but stamped with a resolution that was decisive, and, to the man watching it, appalling.

Fernwell moved back a step, and then there flashed in the candlelight the curved blade of a clasp-knife, keen and glittering as a stiletto.

"I am armed. I shall kill you, if you approach!" he hissed.

"I am not afraid," said Martin, advancing one step nearer, and keeping a wary eye on his adversary.

Teddy tried to rise to his feet, and then fell back again. The woman on the stool began to wring her hands; it was a moment of suspense and terrible danger.

"You will never leave this place alive!" said Fernwell, backing once more, but speaking very fiercely; "by all that's holy, I shall knife you, if you come another step!"

"Oh! there'll be murder done here! yah!" screamed Mrs. Jones.

"Silence, you hag!" cried Fernwell; "no noise—I hate noise. Martin Wynn, what do you want of me, that you tempt me to your death?"

"A chance for him."

"He will not take it—how can I help that?"

"Will you leave him to choose for himself, not influencing him for evil by a word or look? Will you go away now for good, leaving him to come to me or you, to life or death, whenever he is strong enough to pass out of this place?"

"I will—why didn't you say so before?" said the cowed brigand. "I am not fond of quarreling, and I spill no more blood than I can help. Is it a bargain?"

"You will go from here never to return again?"

"I'll take blessed good care he doesn't!" muttered Mrs. Jones, "unless he wants all Drag's Court on his back."

"I will come not here any more," said Fernwell; "I don't want to influence Teddy one way or another—if he thinks that your company's better than his own father's, he can have it. I am not the man to stand in his way—I never was."

"Go, then."

"Lucky for you that we square our accounts in so amicable a fashion," said Fernwell, still keeping knife in hand, and still distrustful—"in your prayers to-night, think of your escape."

He would depart like a brave man, he thought, and with these last words he backed himself out of the cellar, and went up stairs backward, knife in hand still. He let himself cautiously out of the house, panting very much, as though he had been running, and then went on toward the open street, beyond the court, where danger threatened him. He looked round very cautiously before he emerged from his retreat, as though liberty were precious to him; and then, with his head bent low, his hands in his pockets, and himself in the shadow of the houses—the family habit of the Fernwells—he passed away into the night, trembling still with the fear that had unnerved him.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LAST EFFORT.

TEDDY, who had been terribly interested in the dispute between Martin Wynn and his father, laughed, for the first time in a natural manner, at the conclusion to it.

"I thought the guv'nor would shut up when it came to a fight," said Teddy; "he's rayther weak, and not like he used to be. But still you might have felt that knife; he never was partic'ler, and he wouldn't have been lagged peaceably. But what's the good of it all?" he added—"what's the good of this row?"

"He has been persuading you to live with him," said Martin.

"Yes, he has."

"Well, I ask you to think of me instead of him—to let me try if it's not possible to save you?"

"Quite unpos—" began Teddy, when Martin checked him.

"I say that it's hard work for you as well as me," said Martin, "and you tell me that you are not afraid of hard work?"

"You heard what he said."

"I pay no heed to his advice—if you do not, it will be better for you."

"He's right in what he says—I see it all as plain as he does. I don't want to be any better nor I am."

"Your brother, my sister tells me, had this same fear. He shook it off. Are you weaker than he?"

Teddy made a wry face, but did not answer.

"Are you weaker than he?" asked Wynn again.

"He never was a thief."

"No matter."

"I'm a reg'lar."

"No matter."

"I'm the awfulest liar that ever was."

"I'll tell you what may be gained by sticking to the truth."

"I can't stick to any think."

"There, I wouldn't be a-worrying the boy any longer, and him so ill," Mrs. Jones ventured to comment here; "yer're a good sort, taking all this trouble, sir; but Teddy's not the chap exactly to suit—we've had parsons here, and doctors, and priests, and Teddy can't bear preaching to—he never could."

"Are you honest?" asked Martin, turning to her.

"It's like yer imperence to doubt it."

"You are a kind woman, or the boy would have died here."

"We helps one another in Drag's Court—and Teddy's a bit of favorite with the lot on us. Atween us we kept him out of the workus—he was not a-going there, if we could help it."

"Be kinder still, and do not interfere between us for a minute or two—I am going shortly."

"Though I mean nuffink rude in my way," she answered, "the sooner, I shall like it."

Martin turned to Teddy.

"My sister set me a good example," said Martin; "she is good in deeds, and I would profit by her efforts. I see where I have been wrong—where I have feared too much."

"Your sister, Mister Wynn, knew what I was like at once."

"No—she was wrong there. I am right in my judgment of you," he said, somewhat conceitedly; "I am interested in you, Teddy."

"Thankee—but you don't know me."

"Shall I tell you what I thought of doing?"

Teddy began his short, meaningless laughs again.

"If you like."

"I'm in want of some one to help me in my work—he who helps me must be very quick with his fingers and his eyes—there, your natural gifts come handy."

Teddy stared hard at Martin Wynn. Martin had assumed a different style of address; he saw that it was vain as yet to attempt to pierce through the hardness which encased this lad's understanding.

"I get my living cutting out small pieces of wood, making them into patterns on tables—it requires a keen sight, and

a steady hand. I want to teach you that trade, so that you can help me in good time."

Teddy waited patiently, even with interest, for Martin to continue.

"I shall give you very little wages—not any at first—but I shall board you with a family I know, and you will have to come to work early in the morning, and leave off late at night. I shall make a profit out of you, and in odd moments I will do my best—without 'worrying' you too much—to make you as good a man as I can. I wish to say some day to Mrs. Henwood—that's the secret of it all, Teddy—'there's the boy whom I tried to save from wrong, as good a boy as yours, as true, and honest, and warm-hearted. Beginning late in life to turn away from evil, he yet fetched up along the road I pointed out to him, and met his brother Zach there!'"

The dark eyes drooped more and more; the head sank lower on the chest; the thin hands went up to the face and stopped before it. Martin saw his advantage, and continued.

"It is the love you had for Zach that I have heard of—that I have seen—that tells me what you may be, if you'll try. You are not so old, so stubborn, so hard-hearted as you think—there, let me do my best? It is not too late—it has been the right time to come in search of you."

"You don't know what I am," gasped Teddy; "if you knew all, you'd turn agin me like the rest."

"I will trust you, whatever your sins may be," said Martin; "won't you trust *me* a little?"

"No, no—I can't!" shrieked Teddy; "I won't hear no more. I'll go to *him*—I'll try hard to die here, and be rid o' the lot on you. Sir, you can't help me—I swear to God, you can't!"

"Hush!—He will not bear testimony to that."

"I can't stand no more on it."

Teddy flung himself full length upon the floor—face forward—and lay there like one dead already. He neither moved nor spoke when Martin addressed him again; only gave an irritable writhe away from him when Martin touched his arm.

"Very well," said Martin, sadly; "I must go. I can do no more—I will come to-morrow—may I?"

Teddy did not answer.

"You have your life to come in your own hands—after this your own fault, whatever happens. Don't say every body's against you after this—I am going."

No answer.

"Good-night."

Teddy replied not, and Martin Wynn crossed toward the woman, sitting very gloomily on her stone, staring at the floor.

"Don't, for your soul's take, try to lead that boy to evil. That sin will weigh heavily against you at the Judgment, if you do."

"It's no affair of mine," muttered the woman. "I don't say nothink."

Martin Wynn went away silent and thoughtful, making no farther effort. He had done his best, but he feared that he had failed; and like a good man as he was, stirred to his heart's depths to do good—as, thank God! such men are stirred here and there—he went home grieving at the stubbornness of the evil he had encountered that night.

The next day he was in Drag's Court again, but Teddy and the woman with the crutches were gone; and to his inquiries he was met by vacant looks and utter ignorance—real or assumed, it was doubtful which, for they were good actors in Drag's Court. He went away discomfited—baffled in his search—foiled at all points.

"It was not registered that I should save him," said he. "I have had my chance and lost it. I was not quick enough; I was too proud—too fearful of myself and Christie—and he passes away, poor fellow, like a dream. I have been too much a preacher, and too little of a Christian—too stern with one who had all his life met sternness, but never the kindness or gentleness that might have softened him. Well, God help him!—I can't."

He went back to Griffin Street and set down to his work, after shaking his head to an eager question of his daughter.

"Strange that this child should have shown such anxiety to save him," he said to himself at a later hour, when bending over his work intently. "She gets more strange every day, try as I will—she is a woman in thought now, and troubles me. I should have been more earnest with him—I am sure I should—if it had not been for her. If I could

only begin again, fearing less for those I love, and trusting more in Him I try to serve!"

But the task was over; the lesson had been delivered, and there came no penitent to Griffin Street. The days stole by—days that went on to weeks, at last lengthening very much, bringing much sunshine and the breath of summer with them. Three weeks to the day since Martin Wynn had visited Drag's Court; he remembered the time as he sat, late at night, poring over his work by the gaslight which was bad for him, as his daughter had often warned him. Every night now when work was ended, he went down with his daughter to the street door to stand for a while and wait, as it were, for him who never came in search of the help that had been proffered. Now and then as they stood there, a figure like *him* hurried by them—a something of the street as desolate as he was, perhaps, and as full of disbelief in any good—and yet not him for whom they seemed to wait. That night they were standing at their posts once more—for the last time, perhaps—the daughter's hand upon the father's arm.

"If he had only come!" sighed Martin; "if I had had only *my* chance, Christie, to save him!"

"He may come yet," said Christie.

"Never again the chance for me—or him!"

As he spoke there darted from a doorway opposite—dense and dark as the fate which would have held it back, a tall thin figure, ragged, and wan, and wild. It came toward them, reeled, stopped, and then came on again with arms outstretched, and with a look upon its face—a look for mercy, that neither man nor child standing there ever wholly lost sight of again.

"I've come!" gasped Teddy. "Oh, don't send me back agin!"

"Thank Heaven!" ejaculated Martin Wynn.

"I am so glad!" cried Christie; "glad with all my heart! Father," she added, turning to him, "I said that he would come here, for my faith was strong in him!"

BOOK III.

EIGHT YEARS AFTERWARD.

CHAPTER, I.

MR. BRADDLETON'S SHOP IN PARK LANE.

MR. BRADDLETON kept a shop in Park Lane. A quiet kind of shop, with nothing in the windows, and with liveried servants hanging about the doors—a shop that trusted to its connection for support, and was only open in “the season.”

Mr. Braddleton did not consider himself a shop-keeper; the very name of trader would have added an extra shade of color to his already rubicund countenance; he owned a carriage and pair, was a man of considerable property, a man of many clubs, and of many friends, with a crest on his note-paper—crest not found and emblazoned on a ream of note-paper for thirty-five shillings by an enterprising stationer—a place in the Red Book, and a box at the opera. Society courted Braddleton, and relied on him; and if Braddleton relied—that is, lived—on society, why, the mutual confidence is touching, and should be free from any envious shaft of ours. Still Mr. Braddleton kept a shop in Park Lane. The fact is positive, and as the shop must come into our story, we are bound to chronicle the little business transacted over the counter between Mr. Braddleton and one of our characters.

Mr. Braddleton gave first-rate dinner-parties, at which first-rate fellows—fellows with handles to their names, ah, and big handles too!—presented themselves, and made merry at Mr. B.'s expense. If Mr. B. made merry at their expense afterward, that was a *lex talionis*, and no one was dissatisfied.

Mr. Braddleton was a *connoisseur*, then. Not to know

Braddleton, and not to be aware of his extensive knowledge, his consummate taste, was to lose caste at once. Braddleton's verdict on china, bronzes, pictures, old or new tapestry, old or new furniture, was final. Dukes relied upon him; princes, setting up in housekeeping for themselves, sent for him in a hurry; parties with no taste, but plenty of money—bankers, Hebrew millionaires, and dust contractors—threw themselves upon his clemency, and prayed him to do his best for them, and make out his little bill for them whenever he considered it desirable.

Mr. Braddleton took all this trouble to oblige his friends; he never ran after a commission, offered any thing for sale, or put himself forward in any way whatever. He was in London during the season; the rest of his time abroad, pouncing upon out-of-the-way articles of *vertu*, or upon out-of-the-way foreigners, who dealt in the manufacture of "antiques." All his acquisitions turned up in Park Lane in the season; and after dinner, if a bronze, a vase, a painting on copper, a candelabrum, or a piece of china, were admired, it was generally understood that it had its price, and could be sent home in the morning. Let it be added, that no one ever confessed to a bad bargain with Braddleton; it was money's worth for the money, a something that could not have been procured elsewhere. If there were a little "cooking" occasionally,

"Modern repairs
To ancient affairs,"

et cætera, it was only known to Braddleton, and the clever man who did the job for him. Mr. B. was the sublimate essence of Wardour Street; he spent much money, and "turned" much money. He dressed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. He had no connection with the trade, and South Kensington and the British Museum acknowledged with thanks "his loans," and kept his name fresh and green upon their cards. He was a clever man, be it said, and, considering his trade, as honest as he could be. He fought hard for originals, but failing in the fight—as men however stanch will fail sometimes—he fell back upon a copy now and then that was inimitable.

The rage at Braddleton's in the season, eight years after the events related in our preceding chapters, was a cabinet. A modern piece of *marqueterie*-work—*marqueterie*-work on

the mosaic principle, that had not its equal here or abroad, and was, therefore, subject matter for much gossip. A work that had been the labor of many years, it was reported.

A noble work of art, even of genius, was this cabinet. It was the most genuine article of *vertu* in the Braddleton collection, representing honest labor, perseverance, faith in the worker's own powers and taste. There were no burned woods or engraved lines among the gods and goddesses, living, as it were, on the cabinet panels—it was quite a *Maclise* grouping in *marqueterie*; and though the fashionable world bid high for it, still the minimum price at which Mr. Braddleton was disposed to let it go had not hitherto been reached.

There were some “ravelings” of that world in the Braddleton drawing-room one afternoon in May. Ladies out for an airing, and gentlemen making for Rotten Row, had dropped in at Braddleton's, *en route* to hear the latest news, and see the latest “sensation” in still life, hence quite a *conversazione* in Park Lane on the day we gather up the threads of our narrative, and once more trace the fortunes of those connected with our story.

We enter the drawing-room at three in the afternoon with two of the latest arrivals—a mother and daughter, chap-eroned by a perky little gentleman, with wiry hair and pink eyes—a gentleman whom we have heard called Tinchester, and who, at the commands of his mistress, had quitted business at an early hour to attend upon “the ladies.” Somewhat against Mr. Tinchester's inclination this, despite that little passion for his mistress, still quietly simmering somewhere under his frilled bosom. Ladies, in Mr. Tinchester's opinion, were for after business hours, along with the theatres and concerts, and it was an alarming sacrifice of time to be dancing attendance at that time of day, with the sun high in the heavens, and the wagons, and barges, and horses, all in motion farther East.

Miss Lettice Henwood had grown tall and “lady-like”—very tall, it may be premised, and carrying her height with a grace not always apparent in “runners” and “climbers.” Her father had been a tall man in his day, and she had taken after him rather than her mother, shooting up with a rapidity that had alarmed that mother for her health when Let-

tice was a year or two younger. Lettice's growing-days were over now, however, and though she professed that she was strong and well, it was apparent that she had outgrown her strength somewhat, or else the heat of the day had rendered her more pale and languid than her wont. Whether Lettice had improved in personal appearance with the eight years that have intervened since our last notice of her, is a matter of doubt; the features that were somewhat sharp in the child, still remained sharp in the woman—had “set in” sharply, giving her an aristocratic profile, but a full face, the reverse of any thing that was plump, round, or fresh-colored. A sickly girl of twenty, in fact, with melancholy gray eyes, a girl with a decisive look about her, it may be added—a look so decisive, that one or two gentlemen, with slight thoughts of settling in life, and thoughts less slight about a good settlement with the ladies whom they might settle with, winced at it, and fancied it was a better plan to take another turn or two on the common. An heiress was a very good thing in her way, but there were more heiresses than one to be picked up by good-looking fellows with something to say for themselves. Mrs. Henwood was only two or three years above forty—she held fast to forty, in fact—and might marry again, and play the deuce with family arrangements. No one was hovering round the circle of Miss Henwood's attractions, and there was time enough yet, if a good look were kept out from the watch-tower. Memorandum: to keep an eye upon Miss Henwood, only daughter of the relict of one of the richest old boys in the City!

Mrs. and Miss Henwood were both appareled after one fashion and one color—“might be took for sisters any wheres, mum,” Simkins had said that morning to the elder lady, before the carriage steps were lowered by Jeames.

To be taken for sisters was the one grand aim of Mrs. Henwood's existence, hence the costume of mother and daughter. Pink silk bonnets, black lace shawls, clouded or painted muslins—or whatever you call those billowy dresses, that float on parades, and astonish the plebeian Browns—white silk parasols, with linings to match the bonnets, and gloves to match the linings, jeweled bracelets on wrists, and jeweled trinkets in the ears; all these and more bursting on the little world of dilettanteism that bright May afternoon.

Mrs. Henwood presented a less languid appearance than her daughter ; in moments of excitement it was possible in her to forget the part of "fine lady" that she had acted for years. Mrs. Henwood was animated that day. She had but heard of the cabinet that morning, for the man Braddleton, as she called him, had not condescended to drop her a line concerning it—notwithstanding that he had had the furnishing of one room for her in the antique style a few years since, and had had a few "pretty pickings" only last July. She came in somewhat animated, then ; shook hands with one or two friends whom she recognized, and then while her daughter dropped upon a sofa near the door, and Mr. Tinchester paused to dab his forehead, put on full sail, and bore down upon the man of taste.

Mr. Braddleton was delighted to see Mrs. Henwood — charmed to see her looking so well—caught a glimpse of her yesterday at the Opera, and the day before at the flower-show — capital azaleas, weren't they ?— such bodies of color ! Very pleased to see Mrs. Henwood again, to be sure—very much so, indeed—much more than much so, for he saw a high bidder in the eyes of the lady confronting him.

"You're a dreadful man, Mr. Braddleton," half angrily and half coquettishly, "never to write to me about that cabinet—never to let me know !"

"I was thinking of writing to you this very day, my dear madam."

"I hope that you are speaking the truth, Mr. B."

"'Pon my honor. But the fact is"—assuming a grave cast of countenance—"the fact is, I thought that Lord Hufley would have closed with me. The first refusal was promised his lordship, I assure you."

"Lord Hufley thinks that he is entitled to the first refusal of every thing, I suppose," said Mrs. Henwood tetchily. "Well, and why did he not have the cabinet ?"

"He didn't like my price—that's all," said Mr. Braddleton. "It's a matter of no consequence to me. I shall take it to Paris with me in September."

"Where is it ?"

Mr. Braddleton indicated the cabinet, standing in one corner of his room—set rather out of the way than otherwise—the cabinet round which a group was already assembled, discussing, praising, criticising.

"I will look at it when there is a less crowd," said Mrs. Henwood. "Meanwhile, tell me about it—what price you put upon it—who wrote about it in the papers?"

She subsided into a corner of the couch by the window, and Mr. Braddleton subsided into a chair facing her. Here was a chance of business; here was a chance that he had neglected in his eagerness for more patrician customers; he had not played his cards well in this matter, and yet perhaps his indifference to sell had lured the lady here in greater haste than any missive which he might have forwarded. We judge events by their results.

Mr. Braddleton began business at once. The cabinet was a subject to grow eloquent upon. It was unique; it represented a fourth of a man's lifetime—the lifetime of a man of genius. The reader may not be aware that there is a genius in inlaying as well as in painting, and that few and far between are the men who put life in veneers. Half a dozen men in England and France together may be called first-rate marqueterie-workers—certainly not a greater number. And first-rate work—the work of these men—fetches its price; just as a painting by Landseer or Frith, only, unfortunately for the student of this art, the profit flows into the pockets of a go-between like Braddleton, who takes the order, gives out the design, perhaps, and keeps the name of the worker in the background. Still names will escape, and find their way to the light at times, just as the seed sown in dark places fights its way to the light in due course.

The cabinet was dwelt upon in all its details by Mr. Braddleton—a man evidently proud of his *chef-d'œuvre*. Mrs. Henwood listened not too patiently; she had made up her mind to be the purchaser—that was almost sufficient for her, although she would strike as good a bargain as she could under the circumstances, like a business woman, or a woman who had made her money by business. She did not care for the cabinet; it was scarcely to her own taste, that liked something brighter and gayer, with more color and gold in it; but fashion had whispered of the cabinet; lords had been dismayed at its price, and it would render her more fashionable and popular if she became its purchaser. What its price was did not affect her much; she could afford to spend money, and had she not been able to afford it, she thought, with that doggedness of resolution that we first

saw exemplified on board the Boulogne boat, she would have closed with the offer all the same. Money sat not very close to her heart—only that which money could buy.

The price was mooted at last. Mr. Braddleton twined his long fingers together and whispered,

“Four thousand pounds.”

“It’s a heavy price, Mr. B.—it’s an enormous price.”

“Not if you see the cabinet. Allow me—”

“Presently—I shall see it presently,” said Mrs. Henwood; “the company is dwindling, and we shall have these rooms cleared in a little while. You must find these people a great anxiety, wandering about your house as though there were a sale on, and looking into all kinds of places where they have no business. Why, there’s Lettice gone!” she ejaculated.

“Your daughter—really I have been very remiss in not welcoming her before,” said Mr. Braddleton, springing to his feet, as though politeness were to be preferred to the profits of his legitimate business.

“She has gone wandering with the rest, I dare say,” said Mrs. Henwood, rising also; “she’s a little eccentric and curious. And Mr. Tinchester too—oh! there he is asleep, with the back of his head in a porcelain jar—what a droll position, to be sure!”

Mrs. Henwood gave vent to her girlish laugh at this juncture; at this juncture also there came into the room a fair-haired dandy with elevated eyebrows.

“Ah! my lord,” exclaimed Mr. Braddleton.

“I say, now—look here,” said his lordship. “I’ll make it three thousand five hundred for it, and upon my soul, I—”

“Mr. Braddleton,” said Mrs. Henwood, extending her hand to the gentleman whom she addressed, “I will take it at your own price. Is it a bargain?”

“Madam—it is.”

And Mr. Braddleton, delighted at the opportunity of discomfiting a lord—a lord who had nearly thrown the cabinet upon his hands, and was *not* a regular customer—took Mrs. Henwood’s hand, and bowed over it like a gentleman of the old school. Lord Hufley looked wrathfully at Mr. Braddleton when the connoisseur regretted that the cabinet was no longer his property, stared at Mrs. Henwood not too courteously, walked away at last to inquire about that lady,

and to take one more look at the cabinet with which he had trifled too long ; finally strode out of the house, and swore for a quarter of an hour on horseback till he met his uncle, the bishop, riding a cock-horse also in Rotten Row, and looking the picture of good-humor as usual.

With the exception of Mr. Tinchester, still bent backward like a contortionist, Mrs. Henwood and Mr. Braddleton were alone together — standing before the cabinet that had been the nine-days' wonder of the town.

"It's a large sum for so quiet an affair," she murmured ; "but it's rather pretty, and will look well in a recess. Who is the maker?"

"Oh! it comes from one of the first houses."

"Stanley and Burns, I suppose?"

"Ahem—yes—exactly."

"And what man, or men, in their employ made this cabinet?"

"Really I can't say. I never ask the name of the workmen employed on these sort of things."

"One hand, or more than one hand in that piece of marqueterie, Mr. Braddleton?"

Mr. Braddleton thought two. If he were asked upon his honor as a connoisseur, he should say that a certain portion of the work had been finished by another hand. A small portion—but certainly a portion.

"The man's name is Martin Wynn," said Mrs. Henwood.

Had Mr. Braddleton heard the name of Wynn? Well, yes, he might have heard that name at Stanley and Burns's. He would not assert positively that he had. The name of Messrs. Stanley and Burns's workmen were not his business.

"Send the maker—the real maker—to my house with the cabinet," said Mrs. Henwood.

Mr. Braddleton hesitated. Was this lady about to seek the fountain-head at once? — to give orders for cabinets of the makers themselves, perhaps? — to ascertain the money that had been given the marqueterie worker or workers, in the first instance? All this was very possible; but it was not probable that orders could be executed by workingmen; there was want of capital in the way; there was the fear of Messrs. Stanley and Burns; and there was Messrs. Stanley and Burns's wholesome fear of *him*! Mrs. Henwood looked sharply into Mr. Braddleton's face.

"It is mere curiosity—I admire genius—I think the man deserves a few kind words for all this work."

"Certainly—I have no objection. I will write to Messrs. Stanley and Burns at once."

"Thank you. Let the man come with his cabinet. I am sure that it is one man, myself."

Mr. Braddleton said, "Indeed!" very languidly. Mrs. Henwood might be positive concerning an article of *vertu*, but that did not matter a great deal to the shop-keeper in Park Lane.

Miss Henwood came into the room at the same instant, and was met by her mother's sharp inquiry,

"Where have you been?"

"The room was hot—I have been sitting in the carriage."

"In the carriage! I don't see that the carriage is cooler than this room. But you are looking very warm, Lettice."

Lettice muttered an assent to this, and then turned hastily to Mr. Braddleton. A few civilities exchanged in this direction, Mr. Tinchester startled out of slumber by a sudden poke in the side with Mrs. Henwood's parasol, and then the representatives of commerce—of wholesale life—were ready to depart.

"Remember your faithful promise to me, Mr. B.," said Mrs. Henwood, shaking her glossy side curls at the man of taste before she departed from the room, "the workman with his work!"

CHAPTER II.

MARTIN BRINGS HOME THE CABINET.

THE cabinet was brought home to Wimbledon the next morning—brought home by the hands that had worked for many years at it.

Mrs. Henwood had left directions with the servants as to the place for the cabinet, and had given orders that the name of the individual accompanying the work should be delivered in at once to her. The servant fulfilled this commission, bringing in to a tastefully-furnished breakfast-parlor—the window opening upon a fair sweep of lawn and garden ground—the name of Mr. Martin Wynn.

"I thought so," she muttered to herself; and then added, in a louder tone, "ask Mr. Wynn to step this way, as soon as convenient to him."

"Yes, ma'am."

The lackey departed, and Mrs. Henwood, with more alacrity than her late languid *pose* might have warranted, rose and looked at herself in the glass, adjusted hastily a cobweb kind of lace handkerchief upon her head, set her collar more straight, fidgeted with a massive brooch at her throat, finally put her elbows on the mantle-piece to take another long look at herself before the gentleman was shown into her presence. It was a very thoughtful face, at which she gazed intently—upon which, after a while, she tried the effects of a smile, a frown, an arch expression, relapsing at last into the thoughtful mood again, and overtaken in her reverie, and before she could change her position, by the re-entrance of the domestic, announcing—

"Mr. Wynn."

Mrs. Henwood's blushes came up through her pearl-powder at this intrusion on her study, and she remained for an instant perplexed at the advent of the footman and her guest—the latter biting his nether lip hard to keep the smile down in the presence of the servant.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Wynn," she said, the moment afterward. "This is an unexpected meeting, after seven years' separation."

"Eight years, madam," corrected Martin Wynn, "eight years and a few months since we met in Upper Ground Street."

"Where you told a falsehood, if you remember."

Martin Wynn colored.

"I never told—"

"There—there's no occasion to deny it," said Mrs. Henwood, quickly, "it is of no consequence now—you made a promise, and you broke your word, that's all. Men of your class," she added, a little scornfully, "are not very particular, I believe, about the promises they break."

"Oh! yes, we are—a few of us," added Martin; "and I *did* break my word about bringing Zach here—broke my word twice within that month, so I did. Guilty in my own eyes, and in yours, Mrs. Henwood."

"Spoken with your usual frankness," said Mrs. Henwood,

seating herself on her couch, or dropping gracefully into one corner of it. She did not ask Martin to be seated; she would have impressed him by her state, by the effulgency beaming around her "at home," surrounded by the home adornments; she would have had him overcome with awe at her position, standing in her presence as in a queen's, and becoming very grateful for the permission to be accorded, in due course, to seat himself in that room. But Martin Wynn, perceiving the lady at her ease, took at once the chair most ready to his hand, and planted himself upon it. He was a man who loved equality.

"Eight years since, then, you preached to me about my duty in Upper Ground Street. What a dreadful memory you have, man!"

"That year is to be remembered by me for more reasons than one," said Martin in reply.

"What reasons?" asked Mrs. Henwood; "surely you do not call the year memorable because you met—you met any one in particular?"

"Ah! but I do, though," was the quick response to this.

"May I ask you to explain? You are dreadfully mysterious, or romantic, Mr. Wynn."

"I hate mystery—and I am not a bit romantic," Wynn replied with a laugh; "but I can't explain, for all that. Some long day hence the story will interest you, perhaps, more than it does at present."

"I am really curious," asseverated Mrs. Henwood.

She spread out her hands and raised her shoulders slightly, drooping her head on one side at the same time. These were her company manners, and they had been successful in their way and in their day; but Martin Wynn only laughed again, betraying no embarrassment. Mrs. Henwood was a little angered by his manner, but it would have pleased her in her heart to think that this tall, bright-faced, broad-chested man had considered one year very memorable because he saw her in it for the first time since their childhood. She was prepared to draw herself up with wounded dignity at the confession, however—to remind him, by her haughtiness of demeanor, that it was a liberty to think of her, or to call the year of meeting with her memorable; but she was disappointed none the less at his obduracy, and even a little doubtful if he were thinking of her at all in connection with that time.

"Well, I have not permitted you to see me in order to talk about memorable years," she said peevishly; "that is your own business, of course. And talking about business, reminds me of the cabinet that I purchased yesterday of Mr. Braddleton."

"Before we speak of that business, I should like to ask you a few questions, madam," said Martin, with more earnestness; "that is why I availed myself very willingly of the opportunity to come here."

Mrs. Henwood bowed assent to his wish.

"I should like to know how your nephew Zachary is progressing in life? I should be very glad to hear that he has been a comfort to you, rewarding you for much kindness by much gratitude?"

"You have not troubled yourself to inquire for eight years," said Mrs. Henwood in reply; "you would have done so, I imagine, had you been interested in his welfare."

"Indirectly I have heard that he is clever and shrewd, and a good scholar—I had no right to come and ask you, Mrs. Henwood. I believe it was understood by my family that all connection between it and Zachary Fernwell was to cease forever."

"You could not understand a great deal about it, considering that you were in Paris at the time," said the lady; "I might have said something to that effect to your sister—I scarcely remember. Possibly, for I took Zachary for good, and I object to mixed classes, and it was better that his training should not be disturbed; but for all that, had you been as interested in that boy as you professed to be, you would have asked about him before this."

Martin Wynn looked grave under the reproof. After a while, he hastened to offer his defense.

"I was afraid of disturbing by a word his *chance*, madam. I, and a few more, were very anxious concerning his progress, and to hear the good news of his better life from you would have been glad tidings to us all. But surely you wished that there should be no intrusion?"

"I wish it still, for that matter."

"Then I have not been wrong?"

"You ask me about my nephew Zachary," she said quickly; "well, I will satisfy your curiosity. He has proved himself clever enough—*sharp* enough. He enters my business

next week as sub-manager—he is twenty-one—and I have no doubt that he will do justice to the firm. I believe that he does justice to my training—he is admirably adapted for commerce, and once launched upon the sea of commerce, with his head fairly above water, I leave him to make his fortune. He will make it,” she added; “I have no doubt of that.”

“But the—the virtues of the boy—or man, that he is now. Is he grateful, kind, affectionate—”

Mrs. Henwood’s girlish laugh came out in full force at this juncture.

“Really I don’t know—I don’t care,” she said, after the laugh had rung out for a few seconds and startled Martin Wynn; “I never *was* greatly interested in him, you remember, and therefore I have not striven to discover much gratitude, kindness, affection, and all that. I have spent a deal of money on him.”

“But—”

“Oh! he has been abroad the last year or two—why, I have even found a traveling tutor for him. Every one tells me that I am an aunt in a hundred thousand, and I am inclined to think so myself.”

“But you like this boy?”

“I see him very seldom. I dare say I should like him if I saw more of him, or had more time; he’s a gentlemanly young man enough, but, of course, I have not let his troubles—if he has any—disturb me. I am nervous enough without that; and oh! the sick-headaches that I suffer from occasionally!”

She put her jeweled hand to her forehead as she spoke, as though the reminiscence brought back a sense of pain with it. Martin Wynn stared at her as at a strange specimen of animated nature. He scarcely regarded Mrs. Henwood in a clearer light than Mrs. Henwood regarded him.

The lady was the first to break the silence.

“You are a man mixing with all sorts of people, and interested in these Fernwells,” she said—“have you heard any thing of the father, or the brother, all this time?”

“The father was transported for seven years, under an assumed name, I believe.”

“Very kind of him to keep the name of Fernwell to himself. That accounts for me being spared his importunity. Well, serve him right! And the brother?”

Martin Wynn hesitated for a few moments, then said—

"Oh! the brother?—he reformed."

"Reformed?" repeated Mrs. Henwood.

"Some fellow took him in hand, and taught him a trade, and pegged hard at him—at his mind, soul, and understanding—and turned him out a pretty decent specimen."

"For a Fernwell."

"Ah! for a Fernwell, perhaps."

"I am glad to hear it, of course," said Mrs. Henwood, repressing a yawn; "you may know the man who took all this trouble with a thief?"

"Well—I occasionally come face to face with him—when I shave," added Martin, in a lower tone.

"You might tell that man to tell his pupil, or whatever he may be, to keep away from here. One Fernwell has been quite enough to patronize; and even *he* will object very strongly to farther acquaintance with his brother."

"I hope not."

"It has been one aim of mine to render Zachary a proud man," said Mrs. Henwood; "his tutors have had their instructions from me on *that* point, at least."

"For what reason?" asked Martin.

"Dear me!—what a terrible stare that is of yours, Mr. Wynn!—quite an evil eye, I declare!" she said, with her girlish laugh again predominant; "for what reason?—why, for the best of reasons, in order that he might not think of his past life, and of the darkness and wretchedness belonging to it. In order that his pride might stand his friend, whenever his wretched father and brother should come across his path."

"I hope it's an honest and a proper pride," said Martin Wynn, almost mournfully.

"I have paid for the best instruction—I have spent a great deal of money on him," repeated Mrs. Henwood.

It was the one chorus to all her doings in this world; it sounded her praise, and made her famous. She was a woman fond of spending money!

"Eight years have changed him, Mr. Wynn, more than they have you and me. Eight years have not altered you much; but then we were both young—I was a very young widow!"

A fleeting thought crossed the mind of Martin Wynn

that eight years *had* altered Mrs. Henwood — altered and aged her very much — she was three-and-forty now, and looked more than her age; but there were other thoughts crossing his mind, and he had not time for compliments, or for the plain speaking which came more natural to him.

"I should like to see him," he said, suddenly.

"To see my nephew?"

Martin nodded.

"I would prefer that you did not—not at present," said Mrs. Henwood; "let him proceed his own way, and don't disturb the young man. You are very fond of preaching, you know, and I—dislike sermons."

"You go to church, or chapel?"

"In summer-time—in the morning occasionally I go to church," she said, listlessly.

"And Zachary?"

"Oh! I can not say—I really can not endure farther cross-questioning."

"I should like to see him," repeated Martin in a thoughtful manner.

"He is not at home," replied the lady. "Shall we speak of the cabinet? I think it is time that we adjourned to the drawing-room. The servants told you that I desired it to be fitted in the recess by the drawing-room window, I suppose?"

"It is being fitted as you wished by—my assistant."

"Good gracious! have you intrusted four thousand pounds' worth of material to an assistant?" exclaimed Mrs. Henwood, starting up.

"He is to be trusted," said Martin; "and you must excuse me, but he is not to be interrupted. If he is put out, or embarrassed, he is very likely to smash part of it."

"Oh! dear," said Mrs. Henwood.

Mr. Wynn meanwhile had put his hands in his pockets, and was looking down at the carpet.

"Bless the man!—what is he thinking about now?"

"I was thinking about that four thousand pounds you paid for my cabinet," said Martin. "Whew!" with a whistle that he could not immediately repress, "but that was a lump of money!"

"What did you get for it?"

"Eight hundred pounds," was the frank answer.

"Now—if ever—" began Mrs. Henwood.

"It was work at over-time, and a baby of mine; and when Stanley and Burns made me a bid for my life's task, as it were, I thought the price a good one. I put seven hundred pounds away for Christie, and was very glad that that sum stood in my name on the bank-books—like a reward of merit, eh! madam? It took a load off here," and he touched his forehead as he spoke.

"And now you are discontented."

"No," said Wynn after a moment's thought, "not I. It's my own fault, and I should have held out a little longer, perhaps. I will not begrudge another man his bargain or his profits. You have paid too much—that's all—and you, I take it, can afford to pay."

"I hope so."

"It seems hard that I should have had so little out of it," said Wynn; "but that's a lesson for me, and I shall be more independent the next time. There, I'll not think of it any more. Why, it is not so hard even now, in the first flush of the news, as the wish to keep the names of myself—and my assistant—from all connection with the cabinet. Why, the rascals would have it an antique at first."

"Your names have not been widely circulated, at all events."

"They are circulated in the cabinet—hidden in the scroll-work—emblazoned on a little secret panel which I constructed after an idea of my own—being great in secret panels, hidden drawers, and so forth."

"Great in secret drawers!" said Mrs. Henwood, betraying a wondrous amount of animation; "if you can find a secret drawer in another cabinet of mine, I'll give you fifty pounds."

"If there is a drawer I'll find it, you may be sure. But I'll find it for love, not money."

Mrs. Henwood gave a start, then laughed a little.

"Follow me."

"Why, this gets mysterious and interesting," said Martin.

"Secret drawers are for plays and novels—are they not?"

"Very likely they are—I can't bear either plays or novels myself—they're not in my line."

He followed Mrs. Henwood from the breakfast-parlor across the hall toward the drawing-room. He increased his

steps as she neared the drawing-room, as though to intercept her, but fell into his place a few paces in the rear when she turned aside and entered a room adjoining the apartment wherein Martin's assistant was at work.

"It is a tiresome old cabinet, Mr. Wynn," she said, "very valuable, I believe—but very ugly to look at."

"Bought of Mr. Braddleton?"

"No—it belonged to my father. It stood in his library. My father would have spoken of it in his last moments, if it had not been for one of those tiresome 'strokes' which prevented him. Hence I have always been a little curious about this cabinet, for it would be disagreeable—exceedingly so—to keep notes and money hidden in it forever."

"The old gentleman was certainly eccentric. A queer old fellow, to be sure."

"My father, Mr. Wynn," said Mrs. Henwood, with becoming dignity.

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Wynn. "Yes, that was wrong, if you have any feelings to hurt."

"To be sure I have. Do you think that I'm a brute?"

"Upon my word, madam," ejaculated Wynn, "I don't know what to think of you."

"Eight years have not added to your politeness, at all events," said Mrs. Henwood, warmly; "when will you have respect for your betters?"

"Oh! when I find them," was the conceited answer.

"That's my great fault, Mrs. H.," he added more gravely, "I have too good an opinion of myself."

"So I see."

"You see a way to improve that, while I see into this cabinet," said Martin Wynn, taking the small key that she had extended to him from her hand, and unlocking two old rosewood doors.

"What is that cabinet worth, now?" asked Mrs. Henwood, with an eye to a little advice gratis in matters of furniture.

Mr. Wynn backed a few steps at this inquiry, and critically surveyed it.

"What is it worth?" he repeated after a while — "oh, about tenpence or a shilling."

"What?"

"It's a wretched piece of stuff," he said with his French

shrug predominant ; "my assistant turned out a better thing than this in less than six months' apprenticeship ; but then he was always a bit of a wonder with his fingers. You must see this assistant of mine some day."

"I wish you would go on," said Mrs. Henwood. "If that's your assistant talking to himself in the next room, I should say that he was mad."

Martin paused to listen, until Mrs. Henwood once more reminded him that her time was valuable. He put his hand in the cabinet, and sounded the inner panels ; he put his head in and looked about him ; he took his head out with a comical expression of bewilderment.

"Why, there's nothing new under the sun!" he exclaimed.

"What is it—what is it, Mr. Wynn?"

"Hanged if this isn't my idea—the idea of the cabinet in the next room. Come out, you plagiarist!"

Martin gave a tug to a shelf dividing the cabinet into two compartments, and the shelf came out with difficulty from its groove, bringing much dust into the eyes of himself and Mrs. Henwood.

"At the back of my shelf, Mrs. Henwood," said Martin, "is a small drawer, opening with a spring, giving the history of my cabinet. At the back of this shelf in my hand is all the secrets of your father, if he had any. *Voilà, Madame Henwood!*"

He turned the edge toward her, and was proceeding to explain this mystery of cabinet-work, Mrs. Henwood with her hands upon his arm in her excitement, when a strange stifled cry sounded from the adjoining room, followed by the fall of something heavy on the floor.

"Oh, my four thousand pounds!—oh, that clumsy assistant of yours!" ejaculated Mrs. Henwood.

Martin dropped the shelf, and strode away to the drawing-room, looking aghast for one instant, and then rushing forward toward the figure of a man lying full length and face downward on the "velvet pile."

"What, Teddy, old fellow!" cried Martin, raising his assistant, and looking anxiously into his face ; "why, what's the matter with you?"

CHAPTER III.

THE BROTHERS' MEETING.

A BOOK that goes back with its story, goes back as a rule in its reader's estimation. He is an author not wise in his generation, or strong in his incidents, who darts back to the by-gones, and seeks to awaken an interest in things that have passed. The fathers and mothers of heroes and heroines, in whom a fleeting interest may have been aroused, the reader cares nothing concerning, and will not thank the hand that leads him back some five-and-twenty years for explanatory purposes. There is a flaw in the construction that necessitates so sad an attempt, and he is a very earnest reader that attempts the necessity.

We have deliberated as to the expediency of going back some five-and-twenty minutes with our story; we would have avoided all retrogression, and left Teddy Fernwell to tell his own tale, had it not been imperative for the proper working of our machinery that that tale should, in this instance, be told for him. For that reason we turn back on our way—and for one chapter—to account for the eccentric behavior of Mr. Martin Wynn's assistant.

The cabinet had scarcely been placed in the recess, when Martin Wynn was summoned to attend Mrs. Henwood.

"Look it carefully over," Martin had said before departure, "and if there's any damage, make a note of it. You and I must let it stand here—a perfect triumph for us both, Teddy."

"For you, sir," Teddy had said, with an impatient shake of the head, that implied an objection to accept any share in the great work.

"For both of us," repeated Martin, as he withdrew.

Teddy was left alone to examine the cabinet, to see that the shelves and drawers within fitted correctly, to manipulate a little with a screw-driver and a handful of screws. Busily at work there, let us see what eight years have done for the boy who came at the eleventh hour for God's help and

man's. Teddy Fernwell was three-and-twenty years of age at that time, tall of stature, strong of limb, broad-chested and powerful. He had been an ungainly youth, giving promise of an awkward manhood ; but the promise had not been borne out by results, and even in his attention to the cabinet before him, an observer might have detected great quickness or handiness, allied to a certain amount of grace of movement. He stood well ; it was evident as he crossed to the window for a few tools that he had left there, that he walked well ; it was only when you looked him steadily in the face that it struck you that he might have been less plain with advantage to himself. On our first acquaintance with him—a boy calling at a house in Upper Ground Street in search of his brother—it may be remembered that attention was directed to his pock-marked countenance. Time had dealt somewhat leniently with that facial disfigurement, but the face was still pitted, and in excited moments was especially to be noticed. Still it was an attractive face, even a staring face, owing to two large black eyes, which dilated as you looked at them, or when the owner was energetic and in earnest, as he was very often. Those large eyes were the making of Teddy Fernwell's countenance, for the nose was a trifle too thin, and the mouth, well-shaped though it was, a trifle too large, turning up at the corners, too, with that keen sense of the humorous that had been of comfort to Teddy in the early period of his existence, when he had found "fun" in every thing that crossed the path of his vagabondage. It was not a badly-shaped head, taken altogether, set well on his shoulders, or rather on a throat that would have looked less long had he worn his neckerchief more high—a head that was crowned with a mass of black hair, curling all ways at once, as rough as a negro's, but with less wool and more wire in it.

Teddy Fernwell finished his task, and was beginning to wonder what had detained his master so long—even to grow nervous about it, and to stand with his fingers to his lips, considering a question that became of greater weight with every instant that kept Martin Wynn away from him.

"He would not tell her—because he promised me," he muttered, once or twice ; then he looked over the cabinet again, closed the doors, and backed a little way to judge of the perspective ; finally turned his back upon the cabinet,

and took a survey of the drawing-room ornaments in their entirety.

"Spif enough!" was the second comment—a comment that gave evidence of no particular refinement in Teddy Fernwell, perhaps. "Well, so much the better. And happy enough, I hope!"

His thoughts must have darted off at a tangent to something or some one else, with which that drawing-room was connected; for the happiness of satin damask, and walnut wood, was scarcely worth wishing, even by a man who had a great deal to do with "furniture." That man walked up and down the room several times, as though it were an impossibility to remain quiescent, and there were superfluous energy that must escape him; then he paused again, with the screw-driver in his hand, and looked out of the drawing-room window with a little interest.

The windows of this room also commanded a view of lawn and garden ground, that was pleasant enough to gaze at; and here the assistant stood interested in the scene for a while, but still perplexed at Martin Wynn's long absence. He seemed almost nervous at remaining by himself, and it was a strange, half-startled glance that, now and then, he cast over his shoulder toward the door.

Suddenly, in turning to the window again, there was more occasion for alarm, for the change of color on his cheeks, for the dropping of the screw-driver from his hands. Crossing the lawn, with a little basket on her arm—a fancy garden-basket, fitted for such fancy trifling as its owner occasionally indulged in—came slowly a tall, graceful, pallid girl; while at her side, keeping pace with her, and looking now and then anxiously into her face, sauntered the man who had startled Teddy Fernwell by his presence there.

"They said that there were a thousand chances to one that *he* should be here to-day—and the one chance turns up! I felt that I should know him any where, at any time, no matter how the years rolled by; and I know him at once, just as I supposed I should. It's Zach—I'm sure it's Zach!"

Teddy jumped upon the satin damask to see more clearly the condition of things; then jumped off again in dismay at his impulsiveness, and backed a little behind the sweep of lace curtain that floated downward from the gilded cornice.

"I call this a lucky day," said Teddy, exultantly, "though it might do harm to speak to him—to tell him what I am, and how I came so, though he would be very glad to hear *that*, now. Yes, it's a lucky day, and I'll score it underneath with a big broad stroke, and never forget it any more. And when the time comes for him and me to shake hands—just as the master prophesied we should some day—I'll tell Zach how I watched him once from the window of Aunt Henwood's house."

He continued to watch, darting his head away from corner panes, and occasionally bringing it against the window-shutters, whenever the figure on the lawn seemed to turn in his direction. The young man and woman standing there—the young woman snipping at some dry leaves upon a standard rose, over which she was bending slightly—were more inclined to glance occasionally in the direction of another window concealed from Teddy's view; but their attention even wavered in that direction as their discourse became more animated. The lady we saw yesterday in Park Lane—the gentleman we can scarcely say that we have met before. That young man on the lawn is a new Zach Fernwell, requiring reintroduction before he plays his part in future pages.

It was creditable to the perceptive powers of the cabinet-worker that he should have recognized his brother, so wholly had Zach Fernwell altered for the better. Eight years have worked, before and since his time, many marvelous transformations; but few like this, changing wholly the *gamin* to the gentleman. A man of middle height, or scarcely reaching middle height, was Zach now, with a pale, but singularly handsome face, just a trifle spoiled by the smallness of his eyes. He would have resembled an Adonis could he have exchanged eyes with Teddy Fernwell, and Teddy would have resembled a rhinoceros. Moreover, it was a refined face—the face of a well-bred man, taking its stamp from the original or deep thoughts of its wearer; a face earnest, keen, piercing, that seemed to look out at his future, and to possess a fearlessness to meet it, and rise in it. Not altogether a pleasant face, however; for that fearlessness of expression, when it deepened—which it did very often—might have almost implied a resolution to regard no obstacles in the way of its owner's advancement. Alto-

gether, it was a handsome face, that women might love, and men might be interested in—certainly far from a fool's. With a bloom upon it, it would have been considered more effeminate by the men, and less interesting by the fair sex; that waxen countenance set off the raven hair, heavy mustache, and faultless eyebrows. "Heavens! if I had had such eyebrows!" Mrs. Henwood once exclaimed; "what does a man want with such eyebrows as that, I wonder?" Zach Fernwell would have been favored with a fine figure also, had he been less slight; that want of *physique* was against his perfectness, for it drew attention to his small stature, and to the narrowness of his chest.

"It is not a bit like Zach's face," said Teddy, in soliloquy; "and yet it's Zach, I'm sure. The true gentleman they've turned him out, at all events. He's a little chap still—I thought the young rascal never would grow much—that's the gin father tilted down his throat when he would not go to sleep. It's like the old times to see him, though neither he nor I want them back again, God knows!"

Teddy continued to watch, forgetful at last of Martin Wynn. He became conscious of his screw-driver on the floor, and picked it up after a while, by way of occupation for his hands, in which he twisted and twirled it nervously.

"How well he dresses!" Teddy murmured; "all in the right style—no doubt of that, though I shouldn't know the right style if I saw it. But he looks all of a piece, and that's gentility, I reckon. The master thinks so, and there's very little *he* don't know, bless him! I wish he would come in now for a minute, and see Zach and his sweetheart. I wonder, now, if that really is a young lady who has taken to Zach, and whom Zach has taken to? Upon my word," dropping cross-legged on the chair by the window, "I should like to know! It's a funny affair—it's uncommonly interesting! Zach out there, a swell of the first water, and I in here looking at him!"

Teddy looked too long, and was detected. The swell of the first water, not totally unmindful of the house, and looking rapidly about him now and then, after a habit of his own, had become aware at last of a head bobbing to and fro at one of the drawing-room windows, and finally assuming a more barefaced position with its owner's want of caution. The lady and Zach separated without any due haste,

or as if there were any occasion for a hurried parting; the lady sauntering to the next rose-bush, and the gentleman coming on very rapidly toward the drawing-room window at which Teddy Fernwell sat.

Teddy's lower jaw dropped for an instant, and his great eyes became full of amazement; he sat there struck into stone until the brother was close upon him on the other side of the window-glass; then he rose from the chair, and backed as at a spectre advancing to confront him. What should he say?—what should he do?—he who was proud of Zach, and had nothing to be ashamed of now in his own honest self?

Before he had made up his mind, the window was shaken violently, and a very stern face looked into the room at him.

"Open this casement, fellow!" was the imperative command; and the fellow did as requested, unfastening the ornolu bolt, and pushing the French window open toward the garden. In another instant the brothers Fernwell were under the same roof.

Zach did not at once recognize his brother, who had not, however, altered so completely as himself. But then Zach was full of anger, and inclined to resent the cool audacity of a spy.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"I have been at work fitting this cabinet, sir, for Mrs. Henwood," said Teddy, whose mind was not made up as to his future course.

"You should attend to your work, and not waste time staring out into the garden. Whose workman are you?"

"Mr. Martin Wynn's."

The answer startled Zach; the tones startled him still more. His face lost its waxen hue, and was replaced by a red flush, passing away again almost as suddenly as it had come there. The lips compressed, the hands clenched and unclenched, and then all trace of surprise, emotion, recognition—or whatever it was that had affected him—vanished as completely as the blush of shame that had preceded it.

"Is Mr. Wynn here?"

"Yes," said Teddy slowly. "Would you like to see him, sir?"

"No," said Zach, after a moment's reflection; "better not. I have no knowledge—that is, no present knowledge

—of that gentleman. He would not know me, and I should fail to see in him the man I met once."

"He has not altered a bit," said Teddy.

"He is no friend of mine—I don't wish to see him," was the cool rejoinder. "So this is the cabinet, my good man, that my aunt purchased yesterday. Mr. Wynn's cabinet, of course?"

"Mr. Wynn's, sir."

Teddy stepped aside as Zach advanced and examined critically the elaborate piece of marqueterie-work before him. Had Zach recognized him or not, or did Zach think that he, his brother Teddy, had failed to remember him?—just as if he were ever likely to forget him, let him alter as it pleased him, or his Maker. He would wait and watch, and act accordingly. If it were better that they should not call each other brother yet, why then—so much the better! He could take the hint and stand as firm as any man. But it was a strange meeting—not the meeting that he had dreamed of, or been taught to look forward to by the Samaritans who had found him helpless by the wayside.

And Zach was waiting also, it may be said; for there is no need to disguise that fact. He was waiting also, and, despite his passiveness, he was troubled and alarmed. He was quick at recognition, and there had been no mistaking that expression on the workman's face—it told its own story, and brought back all that he was trying to outlive. Still he was a young man of wondrous self-possession; he stood his ground, and looked at the cabinet still more critically after the first beating of his heart was quelled.

"It lacks color in part," he said carelessly; "all these things are clever enough in their way, but scarcely worthy of the time spent upon them. You are a marqueterie-worker, I presume?"

"Yes, sir."

"Fonder of looking out of window than of working, possibly," said Zach, reverting to Teddy's first offense, as though he had become conscious of neglecting his part; "you, with the world before you, should know better."

"Well, I hope I do."

"I suppose you can do a little in this way yourself now?" said Zach more airily.

"I have been apprenticed to it."

"Indeed—I am very glad to hear it."

He stopped, as though he had said or betrayed too much. He had spoken carelessly—very carelessly for him—and it annoyed him. It was not so much the outburst of gladness at his brother's better life, as a sentence off its guard, and Teddy Fernwell, more genuine and outspoken, took it for the former feeling, and dropped the mask at once.

"And glad to see me. Say *that!*"

The screw-driver fell from his hands that were outstretched toward his brother with a frankness and eagerness at which the other crimsoned again, and then recoiled.

"Keep back, please," he said in an excited manner. "I break my word—you break your own—if I shake hands with you, or speak to you again. Man, you put me in danger by your presence here. Why did you come?"

"Why did I come," said the other, letting his hands drop to his side. "Well, not in hope of seeing you—not in bad faith—not to do you harm—most of all, not to do that, Zach."

"Martin Wynn was wrong," said Zach, speaking with rapidity, and in a lower tone, as though distrustful of eavesdroppers. "He should have known that my position here is still precarious, and that you and my father are looked upon with horror and distrust still—I say it was wrong of Martin Wynn to put me in this peril."

"Wrong it was, Zach—I see that now."

"I can't explain—I have not time, and we may be intruded upon at any moment. I will find you out, and call upon you presently—very shortly—perhaps to-night. This Wynn—where is he?"

"With your aunt."

"Good God! He will not tell her that you are here?"

"It is not likely."

"That's well—that's well," he said, licking his lips with a feverish tongue—he was strangely feverish and excited now. "This has been a folly, a rash step and nothing more, and I forgive it. Let it remain a secret between you and me, and it will be worth your while some day."

"Oh, I do not want bribing to keep my name in the background," said his brother with less humility than he had hitherto shown. "I dare say it is best—I will believe so, if you wish it."

"You can't tell what hangs upon it—you can't imagine—"

"I can imagine every thing, but that you shouldn't be as glad to see me in your heart, as I am to see you, Zach."

"I am glad in my heart, of course, to see you," was the answer; "but you have startled me—and I am not myself yet."

"Glad to hear that I have been fighting my way from all the evils of my early life and growing strong with it," Teddy said enthusiastically—"looking out for the day that I could even meet you with the hands of an honest man stretched out to take your own. He who saved me told me that on a brighter path I should meet my brother Zach. Is this the day—or the right road—or the right meeting upon it, after all?"

Teddy groaned, for his heart was heavy, and his disappointment keen.

"I am glad," repeated Zach; "but I can't fully explain now. When there is no one likely to step in upon us, I will tell you of our difference of position, and how it is best that it should separate us forever."

"I thought it was forever when we met last—I don't know why I should care about it now, if you don't. Ours are very different lives, indeed, still."

"Very different—you see that," replied Zach; "you will see all more clearly, when I can more fully explain matters. It isn't that I forget you, or that I am likely to forget you, Teddy," he said in a changed voice; "that even for the past I am not grateful still—or do not wonder at it, and you—and all that changed it. But," with a horror in his voice and in his face that there was no disguising, "I must not know you—honest as you may have become—I *will not know you!*"

"I don't understand quite," said Teddy, very pale, but very firm now; "you are excited, and not able to answer a plain question. I dare say it's best—no doubt it's best," he corrected; "we were only boys when we had a dog-like fancy for each other, and I have been a fool to think that it could live these years in me—and you. You are a gentleman!—I am proud to see it—very!"

It was taken for irony by Zach, but it was not intended by the elder brother. In all Teddy's mortification, and despite the growing sense of their complete separation, he was

proud of that little figure confronting him—that marvelous change from the ragged, shoeless being he had consorted with, and in part resembled.

"You will know all when I call upon you, or write to you. You will not be in haste?—and seek me out, for instance? Come here, in fact?" said Zach.

"Never to come here in search of you—I pledge my word."

"Where are you living?"

"With old Mr. Wynn—at the old place."

"And now, if there's money wanting, or—"

"Don't say any more just now. They're talking in the other room—I don't want to hear any more, and they may."

"I shall see you again," said Zach, with visible discomfiture; "once more—perhaps to-night, at Upper Ground Street. Be silent now—you don't know how our name is hated here—I have never borne it in this house. I rely on you."

Zach stole away through the French window again—hastily and stealthily, and Teddy locked the window after him; and then, when thinking how bravely and strongly he had kept up throughout, he gave way with a suddenness that surprised all self-command, and cast him on the costly carpet, where Martin Wynn and Mrs. Henwood found him.

CHAPTER IV.

MASTER AND PUPIL.

"I THOUGHT it was the cabinet that had fallen over," said Mrs. Henwood; "and it's only your man. Good gracious!—intoxicated, I suppose?"

"No—that's not likely," answered Wynn.

The man laboring under Mrs. Henwood's false charge came as suddenly to himself as he had departed therefrom; he shook himself from Martin Wynn's support, stood erect, and bestowed a sickly smile upon his master.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Mrs. Henwood, with asperity; "flinging yourself about the room and frightening the whole house? Fits, are they?"

"I didn't expect another for a fortnight, ma'am," mur-

mured Teddy. "This was a strong one, sir," turning to Martin; "and took me off my legs."

"So I perceived," said Martin, dryly.

"Luckily for the cabinet, I had done my work, and was thinking of going home—waiting for you, sir, in fact, when it came on like a thunderclap."

"Ah! thunderclaps are very good things in their way, but likely to upset a drawing-room. Are you ready to go?"

"Very glad to go, sir," cried Teddy, with alacrity.

Martin Wynn turned to Mrs. Henwood.

"I do not think that there is any thing to detain us longer here," said he; "the cabinet is in its place, and I see it for the last time. Here, I bid it good-by, my companion of twenty years, my old friend, comforter, adviser."

Mrs. Henwood regarded Martin Wynn with evident distrust. Was he going to have a fit, too, talking like that?

"You do not understand my rambling, Mrs. Henwood," he condescended to explain; "well, it *was* an old friend and comforter. I sought refuge in those panels when I was very much troubled, as I have been—there's a story in many bits of marqueterie before me. I worked that scroll at my wife's bedside, listening to her while I worked; that gay nymph there, with the fluttering robe, was the first work I attempted—that Christie persuaded me to attempt—after my wife's death. Why, it's like an old almanac," said Martin, warming with his subject, almost forgetting his listeners; "there's Christie's birth, and Christie's womanhood; there's the bit of trouble with my obstinate old father sticking still to Henwood's Wharf; here's all the thoughts that came to me about that Teddy—oh! here you are," he said, looking suddenly at his assistant; "are you ready, lad?"

"I have been ready some time."

Mrs. Henwood surveyed the assistant through her eyeglass for an instant, and then turned to Martin.

"The wonder, I suppose?"

"In his way—quite a wonder!"

"It's a wonder he did not seriously damage something in the room," she said. "Is he quite right in his head?"

"Well, not quite—are you, Teddy?"

This was a joke at Teddy's expense, but Teddy only gave a second sickly smile in return.

"We will take the liberty of bidding you good-morning, Mrs. Henwood," said Martin.

"There's—there's the cabinet in the next room."

"I have solved that little mystery. If there should be a paper inside, informing the discoverer that he is entitled to five hundred pounds, or so, for his ingenuity, perhaps you will kindly pass it on to me."

"At what address?"

"Oh! Griffin Street, Tottenham Court Road—the old shop, that I still stick to."

"You should have risen in the world by this time!"

"I am not ambitious."

"You save money, you tell me?" said Mrs. Henwood.

"Well, every body should do that!"

"Oh! I am of a saving turn of mind. So is my assistant. This lad—I beg his pardon—this young man," clapping him on the shoulder, as he shrank back nervously at his introduction once more into conversation, "has a hundred pounds sterling in the funds."

"Who will call the working-classes improvident after that?" said Mrs. Henwood. "Yes, this assistant of yours is a wonder indeed."

She looked at him more intently through her eye-glass, and Teddy looked down and shuffled with his feet. He was awed by her appearance, and she admired him for that feeling, which had never been apparent in the master.

Mr. Wynn was ready to depart. He bowed to Mrs. Henwood, and prepared to leave her in the drawing-room. Mrs. Henwood, to his surprise, seemed to hesitate for a moment, then she suddenly extended her hand to him.

Martin Wynn smiled.

"I have been wondering if you had the courage," he said, taking her hand for an instant; "the difference in our positions being very great, you know!"

She colored.

"You have done me a service this morning," she proceeded to explain. "You are a man of genius, too, whose work"—pointing to the cabinet—"remains in my house forever. I am not above you in mind, at least."

"You are very kind to say so—possibly, that's true enough," said Martin. "Good-morning."

Martin Wynn and his assistant went away, leaving Mrs.

Henwood on the couch in the same graceful and lady-like position that she had assumed in the breakfast-parlor, that she had been trained to assume years ago by a French lady, great in deportment. Martin Wynn and Teddy were let out of the front door by the same sumptuously-clad menial who had admitted them; they went silently along the drive together; silently along the road till they emerged on the fresh breezy common, where Martin Wynn began to speak.

"You have seen him, Teddy?"

"Yes."

"Strange that you two should meet, for I heard that he was abroad with his tutor," said Martin. "Well—and having met?"

"And having met, sir—I'm sorry."

"Sorry for the meeting—or for him?"

"Oh! not for him," said Teddy, quickly. "I'm glad to find him a gentleman, with the proud, big ways of one, and to be certain that he never, never can go back to the old life. I was afraid of that always—fancying that he was not strong of will, and likely to be led away. I don't think that now—so, Mr. Wynn, I am not sorry for him."

"But for the meeting—will you throw a light on that, Teddy? You know my objection to being kept in the dark on any matter."

"You have a right to know, sir, and I'll tell you. The meeting wasn't all that I had hoped it would be, whenever it came to pass. It was all of a sudden—it was too early altogether—it frightened him!"

"Not when you told him of your better life?" said Martin Wynn, stopping for the answer.

"Still, it scared him. He had promised Mrs. Henwood never to know father and me again, or she had threatened him with her displeasure if he ever met us, or had any thing to do with us—something of that kind; and he was ashamed of me—heartily ashamed of me, as was natural enough."

"Scarcely natural," said Martin Wynn, resuming his walk toward the railway station; "natural to his training, possibly—that's all. Well, Teddy, if they have made him very proud, very worldly, very stand-offish, like his aunt, for instance, we will pity such a brother, but we will not break our hearts about him."

"I'm glad to find him so changed," repeated Teddy.

"And there shall come a time, Teddy Fernwell," said Martin, stopping again to lay his hand upon his companion's shoulder, "when he shall be proud of the elder brother, plodding on in life without a twentieth part of his advantages. There's a prophecy for you; and if I don't live to see its truth, why, you will—mark me."

"I can't expect that he will ever do that. I think it best now, just as he does, to forget all about him. You see, I have thought of him too much, because—"

"Because I would not let you forget him. Go on, Teddy; I don't mind that reproach. That kept your heart soft, and having found the key to your rusty affections, why, we opened them by degrees more and more, Christie and I together, Teddy."

"Yes."

"He thinks it better, does honest little Zach, that you should forget all about him too?" said Martin—"well, truth is a virtue. Better for you, if not for him, we'll say. Now, then, before we start off again, I give another prophecy."

Teddy looked wistfully toward him.

"There shall come a time when you will be ashamed of him in your turn—when you will temper with your shame, a fair amount of pity worthy of your close relationship. Till that time comes, so much for Zach!" He snapped his fingers in the air, as if dismissing the subject, to which Teddy was still inclined to cling.

"He wishes to see me again—shortly," said Teddy. "I think that he is afraid that I shall not be careful enough. Just as if I would get him into trouble! Why, *he* should have known better than that."

"He is evidently a shrewd young gentleman; he will get on in the world like the Henwoods, more's the pity!"

"No—don't say that."

"And so much for him, I say," repeated Martin; "there, we puff him away, and in your lower estate, but just as honest, Teddy, we'll be more happy, for we'll be more grateful—more content."

"Yes, thanks to you, sir."

Teddy's eyes were full of tears; there was an intense gratitude in the action which extended the pupil's hand toward the master's.

"No, thanks to God, whose unworthy instrument I am," said Martin reverently.

Teddy was silent for a while, then, as they proceeded on once more, he said—

"I don't know what knocked me over hardly—it isn't as if I was a feeling fellow."

"You were taken sentimental, Teddy."

"And I've nothing to fret about—I always wanted Zach to have one chance. There, so much for him for the present!" said Teddy in a tone more cheerful; "I've you to think and work for—you to pay back, by degrees, not all that I owe to you, sir, but all that I can."

"There, there—you know I don't like protestations! They're not in my line, and I have told you twenty times that if you were a trifle less afraid of me and this new world of yours—had even a better opinion of yourself, it would be none the worse for you."

"Behind me," Teddy said, with a shudder, "always the past life."

"From which you have escaped."

"From which I never shall escape in thought. That keeps me down, and in my place, Mr. Wynn—it's just enough."

"Teddy, you're not in your usual spirits—you're not the man that nature intended you," said his master, "therefore I'll walk the nonsense out of you. No railways to-day for a morbid young fellow like you—full of health, strength, and youth's energy, and growling about your past like an ass in a play-book. Quick march—we'll walk to London."

"I shall be glad of the walk, sir."

"Very well—left foot forward—off!"

Shoulder to shoulder the two stalwart men set their faces Londonward, and marched away, turning their backs upon the great house where the rich woman lived. That rich woman still sat on the sofa in the great drawing-room, forgetful of her *abandon*, her grace, the right inclination of her elbow, the droop of the wrist, and the hand falling over the scroll of the couch—forgetful of the open cabinet in the next room, and the secret drawer within the shelf—forgetful of most things except the man who had recently left her.

"I hate him for his rudeness, his want of reverence, his abominable conceit!" she muttered.

Why should she have been interested in him, or have watched him year after year, then?—knowing his life and actions almost as well as he did. Was she half mad, like her old father had been?—had her wealth, and that wealth of charms in which she believed implicitly, turned her head and made her frivolous and unnatural? She was vexed with herself and her own want of pride, for she shook her white hand at the cabinet, and ground her teeth at it at last.

"A woman of my age," she said, correcting herself almost immediately by adding, "a woman of my position in society!"

The door opened, and her daughter Lettice entered.

"My cousin Zachary has come, mamma."

"Indeed!—how long has he been here?"

"A few minutes—he rode over from the station, I believe."

"Some one should have told me. Where is he?"

"In the next room, I think."

Mrs. Henwood hurried into the next room, meeting Zachary face to face there.

"My dear aunt, I have ridden over to talk of business in earnest with you. How well and young you are looking!"

Mrs. Henwood for once did not flutter at the compliment. She glanced at him for an instant, then at the cabinet, and the shelf upon the floor.

"How long have you been here?"

"Not an instant."

"Go in the drawing-room, and look at my new cabinet," she said. "I will be with you shortly."

Zachary, with a submissive bow, departed, and Mrs. Henwood darted at the shelf—examined it carefully—discovered a small sliding-drawer within it, which fell with a clatter on the floor, as she held the shelf carelessly in her hands.

"Empty, after all!" she said. "Empty, after all this fuss!"

CHAPTER V.

TEDDY AT HOME.

TEDDY FEERNWELL lodged in Upper Ground Street. A place too far away from business, inconvenient in more ways than one, but still a place not selected without due deliberation. He had been for years located in the second floor of a house in a neighborhood farther west, a place not more than two minutes' walk from the residence of Mr. Wynn, whom he served, and who only served Messrs. Stanley and Burns on special occasions now, when work of a delicate character required the best men that high wages could procure.

Teddy had been more handy for business in his former lodging, but he had suddenly and without due notice quit the same, had made for Upper Ground Street in hot haste. He had not sought, in the first instance, the companionship of old Mr. Wynn and his daughter Polly—he had not intruded himself upon their notice until three months after his change of residence, thereby rendering his actions still more unaccountable.

"I thought that you were going to take care of the old gentleman and Polly," Martin had said, "when you flew away from Tottenham Court Road."

Teddy was at work upon his marqueterie, but he left off at this remark, and looked sharply at his fellow-worker.

"Do they want taking care of?"

"They don't think so—but the father gets very old—and very obstinate," Martin added with a sigh; "and my sister Polly wants brightening up a little now."

"If I thought that they would care for such a fellow as I am, or that I could be of any good there!" said Teddy.

"You must think for yourself, Teddy, not for other people."

The next week Teddy was located in the younger brother's old quarters, where he still remained, the sole possessor of Zach's room, taking his breakfast, tea and supper with

"the family," and paying a fair price for his support. Martin Wynn, he thought, had wished to place him there—perhaps was nervous about him living alone in the world, or of meeting fresh temptation therein, he could not tell—and he was keenly alive to every wish of Martin Wynn's. So much so, that Martin had to keep continually on his guard against the expression of a wish, lest he should be embarrassed by Teddy's quick fulfillment of the same, at any cost, exertion, sacrifice. Teddy seldom spoke of his gratitude for his past rescue, for the efforts Martin had made to save him, and train him to a something higher and better than he had been—his words on the breezy common of Wimbledon were almost the first outpourings of his heart, and were attributable to an excess of excitement on that day—but in deeds, great and little ones, Teddy's gratitude was always evident. Teddy's one standard of perfection was Martin Wynn, and it was a fair pattern of a man taken in the aggregate, that Teddy did his best to copy. That he over-estimated Mr. Wynn was natural to his character; he had had no experience of good men before Martin had confronted him; he did not believe, even at three-and-twenty years of age, that there was such another man in all the world!

His affection was not demonstrative with all this; it exhibited itself very clumsily at times; he was reticent when working in Martin's cause, and for his interest; and in Martin's presence he was very thoughtful, almost shy, unless Martin's tact brought him more round to himself. Teddy was a different character in Upper Ground Street; at times he resembled, in his lighter self there, the Teddy of Drag's Court, Seven Dials, quick of action, ready of speech, a laughing, jesting Teddy, that added a new feature to that top room where Zach's rickety morals had been first taken in hand.

On the evening of that day of meeting with his brother—early in the evening before the daylight had died away—Teddy came home to the watchman and his daughter, a very different man to him we have seen at Wimbledon, the man whom these Wynns always expected to see there, and to whom their hearts had warmed long ago.

Mr. Wynn, senior, was taking his seven o'clock nap, previous to a strong cup of tea, and night duty at Henwood's Wharf, when Teddy, alive to Mr. Wynn's habits, turned the

- handle of the door, and entered softly. Teddy had done this for twelve months, waking up Mr. Wynn regularly every evening, despite the care taken upon entrance, and feeling none the less acutely what a brute he was to disturb the old gentleman in that way.

"Ah! Teddy," said Mr. Wynn quite briskly, "reg'lar as the clock, I see."

"I shall make it ten minutes later—giving you ten minutes' farther rest, sir."

Teddy had not adopted Zach's former designation of Mr. Wynn, senior, and the daughter was always Miss Polly to him—occasionally, even, Miss Wynn. The daughter thought it scarcely friendly of him, and too solemn, considering their position, but the watchman approved of it on the whole. He had always liked a fair amount of respect shown him—he had even insisted upon it when he was a coachman down in Warwickshire; and Teddy's politeness was approved of, and that young gentleman valued none the less in consequence. But Teddy, despite this, was on familiar terms with them; he had settled down in their midst, was ever at home there, and "one of them," just as they had fancied once that Zach would be. He had taken Zach's place in that little home, and Polly, though her heart was still true to its first love, considered that he was "next best" to that sharp boy whom Mrs. Henwood had brought up.

"There's no occasion to make it ten minutes later," said Mr. Wynn, in reply to Teddy's last assertion. "I have my fair allowance of sleep in the daytime, and that's enough for me. How's Martin?"

"Well, sir—very well, indeed."

"And Christie?"

"Oh! bright as sunshine, to be sure," said Teddy.

"And Christie's young man?" asked Polly, with that curiosity natural to her sex; "have you heard of him lately, and how he is getting on?"

"Why, he must get on, of course, with the sunshine to smile on every step he takes, and he's not a bad sort either, Miss Polly."

"A good sort," said Polly, improving on Teddy's phrase, "as every body says—"

"And I say too—being one more than every body," said

Teddy, clapping his hands smartly on his knees, "the best of fellows, or he should not go to Griffin Street so often."

"Why, would you stop him?" said Mr. Wynn.

"I think so," said Teddy; "I should find him out, and ask permission to kick him down stairs, or throw him out of window. The very best of fellows, Mr. Wynn, you may depend upon it."

"She deserves the best of fellows, too," said Mr. Wynn, reflectively; "and Martin will be glad if she takes to Mr. Ubbs. 'It's only the best of men that shall ever have my Christie,' he said to me once; and it's singular that that young man whom every body likes should turn up in the nick of time, just as we all could have wished. She likes him?"

"I dare say she does—I hope she does," added Teddy, after a moment's reflection.

"You like him, Teddy?" asked Polly.

"He's a nice quiet sort of gentleman," said Teddy; "oh! yes, I like him. Why," with a laugh that was true and unaffected, "you did not think that I objected to him?"

"Certainly not."

"He's the very man for her; like a girl in his ways, so gentle, you know," explained Teddy; "with nothing in the background to bother him. A good past to look upon, and be proud of."

"By-gones are by-gones," said Polly, sententiously.

"A mother and a father, who were both respectable, pious kind of people to the day of their death—he with a first-rate character ever since he left off cutting his teeth—that's the man for Miss Christie; and I shall dance like a sailor-boy when I know that she's engaged to him. How are the geraniums?"

Teddy was tired of the subject; he crossed to the window where Miss Wynn's stock of plants was invariably arranged, and where the leaves were showing now, and began digging at the earth a little recklessly.

"Bless the man, don't do that!" cried Polly.

"Nothing like loosening the mould round the stem; and blessed if I can tell which is the harder of the two—the earth, or the flower-pot."

He laughed at his jest, and they laughed with him. After recommending fresh air to the geraniums, and being in-

formed that they had had fresh air every day at proper hours, he came back to the patchwork rug, and stood there with his hands behind him, and his back to the empty fire-grate.

"Hope I am not keeping the warmth from you, Mr. Wynn?" he said cheerfully; "but when I'm in the magpie mood, I like this position vastly. And I have so much to talk about, that I'm afraid you'll have to go away with half the news, sir."

"Any thing wrong?" asked Mr. Wynn, quickly.

"All is right as ninepence," said Teddy, to whom clung still many of his old street phrases—the only remnants of his past that remained with him; "that is what makes me very light-hearted to-night. Why, I have seen my brother Zach!"

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Polly; "after all these years. How pleased he must have been to see you!"

"And I pleased to see him, too—you may guess that it was a surprise."

"When did he come back from the Continent?"

"I forgot to ask him that—we had a great deal to say to one another upon other matters."

"He asked after us?"

"Why, you never thought that he would not?" was the quick rejoinder; "no, I should not think that likely! Well," hurrying on with his topic, "you'll be glad to hear, both of you, that he's quite the gentleman. A little chap enough, not long and clumsy like me, and with as handsome a face as ever a man had to be proud of. A sharp, clever man he'll make, whoever lives to see it."

"I always said he would," said Mr. Wynn; "it was in him."

"And as it is just possible that he will come here one day, I thought that I would tell you, lest he should surprise you too much, Miss Wynn."

"I shall be glad to give him a good hug again," cried Polly, warming with the subject.

"Oh! he's too big to be hugged now—quite the man," said Teddy; "he has altered very much, and the alteration must not frighten you."

"Frighten me!"

"That is, worry you," corrected Teddy; "for when a

man gets his age, a man who has been long away, and has been taught—oh! lots of things that we know nothing about—he changes; and Zach is so very quiet now, that you might think he was distant, or proud, or something of that kind. Then you would feel hurt, Miss Wynn—and only his way after all!”

“He will be the same to me and father—as to you, almost.”

“You’ll find him very quiet, not fond of talking about the old days—why, not more fond of that than I am!” added Teddy.

“But the old days here?”

“Were very close upon the other days with me and father,” said Teddy, gravely; “and will be, therefore, best let alone if he comes.”

“He is sure to come now and then,” replied Polly.

“I shall advise him not,” said Teddy, darting with alacrity into the lighter vein again; “he’s a big swell, you know—and what would his aunt, and all his big swell friends, say to acquaintances like us? He *might* like to come too often, and then lose all his chances, and turn every body against him. You know what a proud woman Aunt Henwood is?”

“She will not change our Zach,” said Polly.

“Not at heart. At heart always a good fellow—but he is a man with a way to make in the world, and I for one sha’n’t presume on past acquaintance with him.”

“Acquaintance!” cried Polly; “that’s a nice word for a brother to use.”

“Then I always was a rough, unfeeling kind of fellow,” said Teddy, “and I never could see the use of feelings in people like us. Things very much in the way, aren’t they, Mr. Wynn?”

“Get away with you!” said Mr. Wynn; “and, Polly, pour out the tea, and try to understand Teddy to-night, for I can’t.”

“Why, what is the matter with me?”

Mr. Wynn did not respond, and Teddy did not press the question. Tea finished, Mr. Wynn was assisted into his great-coat—that harness in which he had evidently resolved to die, for he clung pertinaciously to his old place, and became more obstinate with every effort made to bring about his resignation. Mr. Wynn departed, and Teddy began to

talk of the lodgers in the house—for Teddy was full of interest in those who lived about him, and was a favorite with them, after the old fashion of the Drag's Court days. He heard the news of the day—how the printer on the ground floor had been threatened by the water-rate, and what a drawback his wife's confinement of twins was at that particular period—how the man in the front room had not been at home all day, and how the woman at the back had got a situation as housekeeper, and was full of spirits, as was natural enough, after three months ill luck. He had not heard all the news, when the house reverberated with a summons at the door.

"That's very likely to be Zach, I fancy," said Teddy, coloring very much.

Polly leaped to her feet, but Teddy was already at the door.

"Keep here, please, Miss Wynn," said Teddy, "and I'll bring him up to you. My place first, you know—always."

"Yes—that's true."

Teddy went down stairs, but the printer had already forestalled him. The visitor was in the passage explaining his business—that visitor the Zachary Fernwell for whom the brother had been waiting all the evening.

By the light of the flickering candle in the printer's hand, Zach recognized his brother.

"I have come at once—I thought that it was best," said Zach; "you might have left me with a false impression. Put on your hat, and step into the street with me."

"Thank you, Mr. Parks," said Teddy to the printer, who seemed disposed to remain with his back to the passage wall, "we can find our way up stairs. The good lady is better to-night, I hope?"

"Much better, thankee," answered the printer; "and the little uns—both asleep at once, by jingo!"

"Ah! that's lucky. This way, sir."

Zach hesitated.

"I wish to speak to you alone. I would rather not go up stairs."

The printer having departed into his room, Teddy spoke more freely.

"You had better see Polly Wynn—the first friend—and be prepared for her, than take her by surprise. Don't dash

her down, all at once like—some men might," he added after a pause; "but talk a little of the old days, to make her think that she hasn't quite grown out of your knowledge. It isn't much to ask, I hope?"

"No."

"After that, and as soon as you like, I am at your service, Zach."

"What is the use of going up stairs to embarrass her and myself," said Zach, inclined to stand his ground still—"after all, it really is no good."

"Hush!" said Teddy, quickly, as a light shone from the upper floor, and a face looked over the balusters—a face that forty years had not scored very deeply yet—"this way, Zach. Oh! there's no occasion to fear surprising her," he added, loudly; "she has been expecting you for many years, and looking forward to this meeting, just as you have. And it's kind of you to come all this way to thank her, first of all of them!"

A figure darted down the stairs at this, candle in hand, and, passing Teddy, made a dash at Zach, bestowing on him that "good hug," which she had promised herself, and greasing the shoulder of Zach's coat during the operation.

"My dear, dear boy, I knew that they wouldn't teach you to forget your Polly, let them try never so hard! It's like the old times to see you once again!"

CHAPTER VI.

ZACH THROWS A LIGHT UPON HIS POSITION.

ZACHARY FERNWELL made the best of the *contretemps*. A moment's warning to prepare was sufficient for him, and his brother had put him on his guard, and implied all that was necessary and befitting. He had wished at that time to be spared a meeting of this character, but it had come, and he was ready for it.

"I am very glad to see you, Polly," he said; "shall we go up stairs, and talk a little of the old times, before I carry Teddy away?"

"Carry him away!—where?"

"On business—a little business together, he and I."

"Come up stairs," said Polly Wynn—"no one more welcome in this house of ours than you, Zach. I suppose," she added, putting suddenly the candle so close to his face, that he flinched back, "you're not too proud to be called Zach by all old friends?"

"No—not too proud for that."

They went up stairs together into the room on the second floor, which had been tenanted by the Wynns for many years, which Teddy had once advised the Wynns to vacate, wherein Zach's first glimmerings of light had come, and Zach's first feeble step toward a better estate had been made, thanks to the woman with the tear-filled eyes, watching the wanderer in that house. And Zach, the wanderer, looked round the room, and could not steel his heart against all associations connected with that humble dwelling-place. The place had not changed, like him; it had not altered in one particular since he stood last a boy there; he could value at its truer worth the care and love that had found its way to him, than in that time when he suspected a snare in every kindness. There was the patchwork rug, only a trifle less vivid in its coloring than when he used to crouch upon it, and stare into the fire; there was the same set of chairs, with the volatile cushions, and that capacious emporium, easy-chair, or whatever it was, wherein the watchman took his nap before night duty; there was the china tea-pot on the mantle-shelf, where Polly kept her silver thimble, and whence Teddy stole it; and surely they were the same geraniums, "green in the wood," that were fighting against the winter eight long years ago? In eight years he had changed very much—he had been polished exceedingly, and had hardened in the polishing bestowed upon him by a clever, but worldly teacher; but here nothing seemed to have changed, and he stepped back to the old scene as into a purer atmosphere. He felt less worldly, and he breathed more freely; it was a change that he could not account for, and he made no effort to repress it.

He sat down at the table, and his brother and the old friend took their places near him, keeping their faces turned toward his own with an intentness that perplexed him after a while.

"They are like the old times come back," he murmured—"I wonder how it would have been with all of us if I had never gone away?"

"Not so well, I dare say," said Polly; "you have been a lucky young man, and I hope, will make your fortune."

"I hope so too," said Zach, with a laugh that was a little forced; "I must not grumble at my start, and I shall do my best—to rise."

He was silent for a while after this. Polly became absorbed in his changed looks, and his outward exterior, and Teddy, with his hands in his pockets, sat also absorbed in his brother.

Zach said, after a long pause,

"I thought that I would let you know, Polly, how I stand in the world; and prove to you that I have not forgotten the old home, or grown too proud for it. I might not have faced you at once to tell you this," he added, suddenly remembering that his heart was less tender when he knocked at the door a few minutes since, and becoming mindful, also, of his brother's steady, melancholy stare, "but I should have taken the first opportunity, at all risks."

"Risks!" Polly repeated wonderingly.

"The truth is," said Zach, "that it *is* a risk to come here—that I risk every chance to which I have been toiling by venturing to this place. My life has not been all sunshine on the higher ground—you must not think that, either of you—I have had much to endure, to put up with, to conceal. You can not guess how hard and cold and vain a woman Mrs. Henwood is, and how her pride resents, as an affront to herself and all that she has done for me, one backward step, one backward glance in this direction."

"Oh! I would go home at once, then," said the alarmed Polly. "I would not risk so much for so poor a gratification—you with the chances all before you now. You've seen us—now I'd go away."

"Presently, I will," said Zach quietly. "You, a sensible woman, I knew would realize the peculiar nature of my position. I am not a selfish man—far from it," he added, egotistically; "but there is a duty before me—a duty even to the woman who gave me a good education, and did the best she could for me. You see that too, Teddy."

He was aggrieved at his brother's silence—at his fixed look toward him, and puzzled at it also. He turned to his brother to break the spell, as it were, of this taciturnity. Teddy quite started at the appeal.

"I'll try and see it all as clearly as I can," said he—"talk to her now. I'm thinking my hardest, Zach, and I'm not so bright to-night, I fancy, as I might be."

Zach turned to Polly again. He addressed her, but he spoke to Teddy indirectly.

"My name is Henwood to the world—I have taken the name at her wish—she hates the other intensely. She threatens me with expulsion from her home, and the loss of all her patronage, if I seek to confront my father or brother ever again. On all my past—on the friends I knew before I came to her house, an interdict is set; but I have dared all to come here and tell you this, thinking that you would see more clearly the motives which keep me away, and believing always in the good feeling that I entertain toward you."

"I will believe it always, Zach—why shouldn't I?" cried Polly; "if you hadn't broken your promise to Mrs. Henwood to come here after me and Teddy—or if you had passed me in the street, I should have guessed well enough the truth. I knew that we were parted when I left you at the grand house at Wimbledon; and if we parted for good, still it was for *your* good—and I didn't fret about it."

Zach glanced once more at Teddy, still rigid and impenetrable; then said more hastily, and more naturally,

"I was at my best here before my father came to thwart my hopes of honesty, and I fancy after that time that all the good went out of me."

"What!—when you—"

"There—there, we'll say no more about it; Polly," he said, rising—"good or bad, I have decided on my future, and I shall make a good man of business, at least."

"I'm sure you will. And something more than a man of business, or you would not have come here to-night. And, Zach," she said, laying her little plump hands on his arm, looking into his face affectionately, "as you go up higher and higher, getting greater and richer with every step, and farther and farther away from me, think that I shall be very glad to watch you at a distance, and content to watch you thus, knowing that you don't forget us all. *But*," her look assumed once more that intentness of expression, at which Zachary Fernwell had already winced, "you have no right to promise Mrs. Henwood any thing that parts you from your brother. More, you have a right to tell her—"

"Zach and I will talk this over in the street together," said Teddy, interrupting her—"we understand each other very well—we have not forgotten each other, and I read it all, just as he does, like a story book. You're a good friend—one of the best of friends to me—but," here his voice assumed a strange dignity that stopped all interference in his favor—"but you must not plead for a man who is able to speak for himself. I'm ready, Zach."

Zach parted with Polly Wynn, succumbing to a second embrace with an ease that showed his adaptability to circumstances; then he followed his brother down stairs and out of the house. They walked on silently together till they were a long way down the narrow street, then Zach began:

"You are offended with me, Teddy?" he said at last.

"No, not offended."

"You are surprised at the alteration in me?—but I can not remould myself."

"That's a better phrase than the other, Zach," replied Teddy—"yes, I am surprised."

"You are altered too—the new sphere in which you have mixed has changed you very much."

"I hope it has," was the quick response; "or I would not be walking with you, even in this dark street. I think that my new life, my honest life, Zach, gives me a claim to that—for this once."

"Surely it does. And if you could believe how glad I am to know that, Teddy," said Zach eagerly; "and what a load it has taken from my mind!"

"I believe it—really," replied Teddy; "but still I am surprised—and it will take much time and thought to get over my astonishment."

"At what?"

"Oh! at every thing about me and you—I can't explain more clearly—I was always clumsy in my explanations."

"I have come here to explain much myself, Teddy," he said; "to show you upon what a single hair hangs my position. If I were dashed down now, I should be worse off than you."

"I think you would."

"Judge, then, how necessary it is for me to sacrifice my natural feelings to my future, and to be content to proceed

alone in life. It is a struggle for me now to say this, and to bid you forget me. Your moral change does not affect our relative positions toward each other—Mrs. Henwood would remind me of my word, and would distrust every motive that led me in your direction. I do not say that you are to forget me forever—that there may not come a time when I shall be more my own master, and better able to stand my ground—but I am not strong now.”

“Zach,” said Teddy, “you were never very strong—I don’t think that you will ever be possessed of that strength that bears up against trouble or temptation, and I see well enough the weakness that is natural to you, and which you can’t help. I don’t complain—I’m not able to advise—you are a better scholar, and should know what is better to do than I—only don’t worry me with fifty reasons when one will suffice.”

“But I remember that without you, I should not be in this position, Teddy—don’t think me all that is base and ungrateful. If I have one good feeling left, by God! it is the remembrance of this man!”

He struck his brother almost angrily upon the shoulder in his excitement; he was weak enough, and selfish enough, but the meeting with his brother, and that brother’s manner, had had its effect upon him. Teddy, detecting remorse, perhaps love in Zach’s stifled tones, turned quickly to him.

“Zach, you are not happy!”

“No,” was the mournful answer; “I can’t say that I am, for I am always in danger.”

“We will take one danger away,” said Teddy; “you need not be afraid of my stepping in and alarming any friends of yours. Whatever my life is now, I am conscious—horribly conscious—of what that life has been, and how it may leap forth at any moment to shame you and all who have taught me better. Behind me always, Zach, the prison!”

Zach walked on silently; he did not intrude upon his brother’s remarks; they were telling in his favor, and he had no farther cause to plead for separation.

“Therefore, I shall never seek to meet for your own sake,” continued Teddy; “more, I will shun you always—just as you wish—unless there should come to you need of my poor help, by any strange chance that forces us together.”

"And there may be need of mine, Teddy—pressing need, and then—"

"And then we'll talk about it," said Teddy; "there is no occasion to waste words now on the subject. Have you any thing more to tell me?"

"I do not know that I have," was the reply.

"Or to ask me?"

"N-no," said the brother.

"I thought you might have been curious—as *I* might have been in your place—concerning an escape from the streets and the devil. Grateful even—as *I* should have been, with all my heart—to know that by a miracle, as it were, the brother who was feared so much had been taught the difference between good and evil—to know the teacher, and thank God for the mercy that placed him in the way of one despairing. You, Zach," he added, very mournfully, "are not curious concerning this?"

"Yes, I am," responded Zach; "will you tell me?"

"It is a story easily guessed at. I was saved by Martin Wynn; I have been taught by him to earn my own living honestly—to love him and all belonging to him. I think sometimes that it would be the best end of my life to die for him, to show how grateful I am—I can't in any other way, and I would no more care—if my death would do him any good—than I cared for picking a pocket once. I feel that I ought to do something," said Teddy with enthusiasm, "and nothing comes in my way to help him, and never will, for God will help a man like that, I think. And yet, Zach, he came to me first, because I went to him, and—*lied*."

"Yes—I know," said Zach, and his head was bent forward as he walked on by his brother's side.

"That lie is ever between us, and keeps me down, renders me ashamed even yet to look him in the face. But what could have been done to save you, but the biggest, blackest lie that I could invent? I feel that I built my better future on that lie, and some day the foundation will crack beneath me, and let me through away from him."

"It shall not," said Zach impulsively; "it is not likely now," he added with more discretion. "You should not think of all this—it belongs to years ago. It is," with a palpable shudder, "a very unpleasant reminiscence."

"We'll drop it," said Teddy, "just as we drop each other

after to-night, quickly, and without a fuss about it. I shall see the sense in your coming to me, as clearly as you do, only it takes time to master it. You don't belong to my life any more—and I will live without you happily enough."

He extended his hand, and Zach shook it in his own; but when their hands were separated, Teddy did not immediately withdraw.

"You *may* want me some day, as I've said," Teddy remarked. "You're in a queer house where queer things turn up; and though you're clever and sharp enough—I see it in your face—still, you're not strong of will."

"My will is like iron," said Zach, not pleased at Teddy's assertion.

"In one way, possibly," was the dry answer; "but still you're weak, and that weakness may lead you, heaven knows where, Zach. I hope it won't, with all my heart—I hope now that we sha'n't face each other any more. Three times have we said good-by to one another, and yet we meet again, always for strange reasons of our own. This morning I was disappointed with our meeting—very—but I am glad that it has come and passed, and killed all the foolish thoughts that I had had concerning it. I should have known better at three-and-twenty years of age!"

"I have been going to ask you more than once concerning—*him*?"

"He has been abroad," replied Teddy; "you understand. He got into trouble, or trouble overtook him, and he—went abroad."

"For how long?"

"Seven years."

"He will come back, then?" said Zach.

"Sometimes I hope that he will," said Teddy in reply.

"Good God!—what for?"

"I can't say—it's only sometimes that I fancy that I should like to see him and talk to him for a while—and there are times when I feel afraid of myself, just as you do."

"It is very odd."

"Oh! I have grown a very odd fellow," said Teddy carelessly; "a man with odd thoughts that disturb me, give me odd dreams at night, wake me up, and won't let me dream at all. Why, Zach, I am sometimes envious of your chances,

and wish that I might grow as rich as you, and have time—
heaps of time—upon my hands.”

“Do you want any money? Can I—”

“No, thank you,” quickly answered Teddy, “not just now. You save money instead of me, and think, now and then, of what is the best to do with it, and of the children who are like ourselves—*just* like we were, Zach, only with nobody to save them.”

“I wonder,” said Zach, “what you really think of me?”

“Why, that you will do your best, to be sure—for there was always good in you, and I see the good in you now, though I’m not so proud of you as I thought I should be. You see,” he added, with more warmth, “I wanted you to come to me, and offer to be friends forever, and then I—like a hero, ho! ho!—was to give you up, and tell you to wait for years and years, until my name went far enough back in the charge-sheets of *the station-house*. I wanted you to be more sorry to part with me than you are. There, that’s the truth!”

Zach was moved by this frankness, as he had not been moved before that night. He shrank within himself, feeling for the first time an immeasurable inferiority beyond all gauge—guessing for the first time how they both had altered.

“I act for the best,” said he.

“I know it. I know all this is for the best too—no one better. Good-by again. We needn’t come the sentimental in Upper Ground Street—sentiment don’t pay, Zach!”

He turned, and Zach went on his journey. The younger brother walked rapidly away, disturbed in thought and purpose, and very much perplexed. Before him, during the last two years, he had but seen the boy whom he had left last—generous in his way, deep-feeling in his way too, but unprincipled, untruthful, and a thief; and now a new brother, who was a riddle to him, who had not forgotten him, whom from that night he should never understand, shunning all knowledge as he did. That brother touched him suddenly on the arm again.

“I had forgotten,” he gasped.

“Forgotten what?”

“You had forgotten too,” said Teddy, “the old man at the wharf—the first of the Wynns who led the Fernwells to

the light. He's very old now—and we must not pain him, you or I, if we can help it. What happened at that wharf—what might have happened—should keep us ever grateful toward him. Why, Zach, what would he think of you, if you did not bid him good-by also—you, the man he is so proud of?”

“I will go to him—yes, you are right.”

He turned and went rapidly back toward the wharf whence his first step upward had been taken, and Teddy dropped behind, and let him proceed at his own pace away from him.

“Ah! if Martin Wynn had only had the bringing of him up,” said Teddy, humbly, “Zach *would* have been a credit to him, and nothing against him—ever!”

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIE'S YOUNG MAN.

TEDDY went to business in Griffin Street, Tottenham Court Road, at the usual hour. He had learned habits of punctuality under Martin Wynn, and he was not likely to forget them in his service.

The servant opened the door—Martin Wynn kept a servant now—and Teddy went at once into the front parlor, which was at this especial time the workshop. Eight years ago, Martin Wynn, for the benefit of his child, and for the sake of companionship, had constituted part of the drawing-room a workshop; but with increase of state, or position, or with an eye to “the proprieties,” and to his apprentice, he had altered all that, dismissed the lodgers, and taken more room unto himself. He was already at his work when Teddy entered; he looked up quickly over a little table that he was inlaying with ebony and ivory.

“All right?” he asked.

“All right!” responded Teddy, cheerfully.

“And all right *means* all right?” said Martin Wynn.

“And you have not come here to turn our ale sour!”

“No, sir. For the little breeze yesterday, I'm better.”

“As it should be, Teddy.”

“I saw him again last night, sir—we had a long talk to-

gether, and I think that we are the better for it, the couple of us."

"He was sorry for the morning's dispute—eh?"

"He and I came to a fair understanding, sir," replied Teddy; "he said it was best, and I saw it was best—and we talked to each other till his heart opened a little wider, as I felt sure it would. Having seen him—having parted from him—being certain that he will get on now in life, I am the better and the stronger for it, *really*!"

"Really and truly, as my Christie used to say—my Christie, whose birthday is to-morrow, Teddy."

"Yes, I know."

"Why, how do you know?"

"Didn't I come last year, and the year before that, and every year, with Mr. Wynn and Miss Polly?"

"Yes; but I did not fancy that you were clever at dates. And you'll come to-morrow, of course, along with the good souls from Upper Ground Street. The good obstinate souls," he corrected; "who would have driven a saint wild with their independence."

Teddy Fernwell and the good souls entered an appearance the next day at Martin Wynn's house, and wished Christie "many happy returns;" and Christie thanked them with a very elaborate courtesy for all good wishes looked and expressed. Christie Wynn had become a bright-faced, pretty woman of twenty years—graceful, light, and sparkling, as befitted her age and her father's home. Martin Wynn required a genial presence in his chamber, to keep the shadows from them; and he had been blessed with a daughter whom he could respect as well as love and admire. Years ago he had been afraid of her becoming old-fashioned; she regarded things so practically; but she had been only a girl with the cares of housekeeping on her mind; and now that the tide in the affairs of housekeeping ran on smoothly, and there were no odd shillings to be anxious about, Christie was what nature intended. She had been brought up by a truthful father—a man who was religious without being ascetic—and that father's training had not been ill directed, but had tended to the profit of the daughter. She was the true companion for Martin Wynn, who would have grown more stern, perhaps more worldly, in his long widowerhood, had it not been for the in-

fluence exercised in her turn. In the latter days she could repay back with interest the father's teaching; and the father was grateful for it, and thanked God for it. She was the true companion for Martin Wynn, we say again—the daughter he deserved to have for all his care and love—just the daughter we can imagine Martin having—with the father's good qualities predominant, and toned down somewhat to a true feminine standard. They came of a good stock, these Wynns.

All that the world possessed of this particular breed of Wynns was present on the occasion of Christie's twentieth birthday; and it was a pleasant sight enough, and worth a stroll to Griffin Street. Mr. Wynn, senior, was in the post of honor, that is, in the easiest chair in the room, looking his age, perhaps, owing to that formidable bend in his back, but looking full of life still, and with his hair as erect, bristly and energetic as ever. Between him and her aunt Polly sat Christie; while facing them sat Martin Wynn, Teddy Fernwell, and Mr. Ubbs, more frequently alluded to in our preceding chapter as Christie's young man.

A singular young man, this Mr. Ubbs—very tall, very thin, with a giraffe aspect about the throat, which had a nob in the middle of it that rose and fell, swelled and diminished with a suppressed excitement, a nob which never got any farther—evidently a stopper that kept down the feelings exceedingly well, and was therefore of service to a very mild and exemplary young gentleman. A young man of a serious turn, or his meek, melancholy visage belied him. It was an old-looking young face, and the picture of placidity—the result of rigorous teaching, an even temperament, an uneventful life, and a bung in the throat. Every body at chapel liked Mr. Ubbs, because he agreed with every body, subscribed to every thing, was never out of his corner pew, and had illimitable faith in the minister; every body outside the chapel, and beyond the pale of the sect, liked Mr. Ubbs also, for the reason that he was the soul of honor in business transactions, not hard upon any body, gentle as a woman in his speech, anxious to help the unfortunate, and possessed of plenty of money, thanks to bachelor uncles and maiden aunts of good property, who had all died early to oblige him. An early-dying race for the matter of that, these Ubbs, the present gentleman at

eight-and-twenty years of age being the only Ubbs left on that side of the water. If there were any serious drawback to this character having "the smallest possible part" to play in these pages—a poor run of two chapters, at the utmost—it was his extreme placidity, his dead level. His gentleness was a trifle aggravating to more irritable beings; and his ignorance of the world, and what the world beyond his own small hemisphere was doing, rendered him far from a conversational companion. He was more at home at Wynn's house than any where else, chiefly because he had taken to Martin Wynn, and Martin Wynn's daughter. He always enjoyed himself in Griffin Street, though he said very little, and smiled less. He was fond of listening to people more gifted with loquacity than he; but no subject gave him any particular degree of animation, and had he had any enemies, they would have thought him half an idiot. But his friends said that he was a good, sensible, and pious young man, and we shall have no occasion to prove in this instance how easy it is for friends to be deceived. That he was sensible in fixing his affections on Christie Wynn was evident enough; he saw how her lighter, brighter character would influence his own, and shed a radiance round his home, just as it had round her father's; but he had not clearly enunciated these doctrines yet to Christie, though he had to Christie's father, who had received them courteously, and told him to bide his time, and take his time.

It was a good offer for Christie, Martin saw; it took away an anxiety as to Christie's future; but he would not attempt in any way to force his daughter upon Mr. Ubbs, and he had not hitherto witnessed in her any great signs of affection for that gentleman. He had confidence in Mr. Ubbs winning upon her heart by degrees, as Mr. Ubbs did win upon most people by gradual but sure installments.

There had been a few presents tendered to Christie, and accepted. Mr. Ubbs had startled her by a writing-desk of prodigious proportions, which a boy had brought home on a wheelbarrow. Mr. Wynn, senior, and Polly had had their humble contributions to bestow; Martin had been generous with a silk dress, that Polly was to make up at her brother's sole expense; Teddy Fernwell gave nothing but his good wishes and stammered over them. These protest-

ations occurred after tea, when they were facing each other, as heretofore described; when Martin Wynn had wine and cake upon the table, and there were no signs of business about; when it was generally understood that this was a happy day, and a high holiday, as befitted the importance of the occasion; when the hour was half past six, and there was daylight yet, and to spare, in the precincts of Griffin Street.

"I think we'll have a song," said Martin, who was master of the ceremonies, "or it will not seem half a birthday."

"Ah! let us have a little singing," said his father, "before I start to business. Christie shall begin."

"Confound that business!" ejaculated Martin; "if I would not be ashamed of business at your age! Why don't you resign, and ask for your pension, like a reasonable man?"

"I'm not too old for it—or too proud for it, Martin," was the reply; "it's a task I have got used to, and that I like. Ah! I don't know exactly where my substitute's to come from some day—that bothers me very much, for I can't be always on the premises. But we never agree upon that subject, Martin—it upsets your pride to think that I won't be a burden to you. Why, as long as I live," he added with a cheerful crow of satisfaction, "I don't mean to be a burden to any body."

"If you can help it, sir, of course," timidly suggested Mr. Ubbs.

"Why, of course, I take that into consideration."

"Exactly—I have no doubt you do. Excuse my mentioning it."

Mr. Wynn, senior, graciously inclined his head, and then resumed the subject of his discourse. He had forgotten that he had asked Christie to favor the company with a song, until Teddy broke in upon his observations.

"Hold hard, sir!" he said, rather brusquely perhaps, "Miss Christie's going to sing, if you remember."

"My memory's very good, Teddy. I'm not likely to forget. Now, Christie, what a time you take, to be sure—like all fine ladies with good voices, and here we've been waiting these last five minutes!"

Christie sang after this reproof. She had a sweet, if not a powerful voice, and she had the very rare gift of singing

with expression. It was a voice that most people would have liked to hear, and to which these honest every-day folk paid the compliment of rapt attention. It was sung without accompaniment, although Martin Wynn had speculated in a piano, and added music to the rest of Christie's accomplishments; but Mr. Wynn, senior, liked his music drawn off naturally, and with no new-fangled twangs in it, and Mr. Wynn, senior, always had his own way there. Therefore it was a ballad ended very speedily, taking the auditors by surprise, and leaving them motionless and staring, till Christie's musical laugh brought them to their senses.

"Why, how cross and dull you are all looking," she said; "that is the effect of my sentimental ditty, I'm afraid."

"And Christie never likes sentiment," said Mr. Wynn. "I am very glad that she takes after her father in that."

"Sentiment's all sham!" affirmed the watchman, "and you take after *your* father, Martin, just as it should be. I brought you up in the way you should go—though you did dissent from the Church out of pure obstinacy, boy—and you have gone pretty straight, keeping sentiment in the background."

"I think sentiment is a very good thing in its way," said Mr. Ubbs. "Of course, I have not had any thing to do with it; but don't you think so, Mr. Fernwell?" he said, appealing to Teddy.

Teddy quite started at being thus directly addressed. He preferred to sit still, and observe, and think at this small reunion—"sitting in state," he termed it to Polly. He was shy in company; only his most intimate friends of Drag's Court days were aware of his powers of conversation, keen sense of humor, and readiness at repartee. Under favorable circumstances, Teddy could still render himself very agreeable, and very quaint; but the wind and tide had been against fair sailing during the last week, and Teddy was disposed to hold his peace, and keep Mr. Ubbs company. Like Mr. Ubbs, he had been enjoying himself very much in his fashion, until his opinion on sentiment was suddenly required.

"Well, I don't think it is," was his sharp answer, however.

Teddy was seldom at a loss for a reply, or took time for grave consideration of his words; this was natural to both estates.

"Why not, Teddy?" asked Martin, always anxious to draw upon the reflective faculties of his pupil.

Teddy blushed again, rubbed his hair the wrong way, then said, with his customary rapidity of utterance,

"Because it's a fine word meaning fine feelings, I take it. I don't know what else means sentiment."

"But real feeling—that's my definition of sentiment," said Mr. Ubbs.

"Ah! real feeling, when there is a real occasion for it!" cried Martin, bringing his hand down vigorously on his knee—"that's very different. I like men in earnest—looking ahead of them earnestly, holding their ground, and keeping back the impostors; trying to get as much legitimate happiness out of the world as they can for their money; sensitive to the real troubles of others, and despising the weakness that gives way to false ones."

He looked hard at Teddy, as though he feared that one person of that company was still inclined to brood upon an affair of no consequence, and Teddy colored again, taking the hint to himself. Martin Wynn thought that his assistant was still pondering over the meeting with Zach, when Zach was far from Teddy's thoughts that evening, at least. And Teddy mistook Martin's thoughts altogether—so misconceptions arise when people will not speak out.

The time stole on; Martin passed the wine round; there was more singing on the part of Christie, on the part of her father, who had a baritone voice, that he would have been more proud of had he possessed the requisite time to think of its capabilities; on the part of Polly Wynn, who could not sing a note, but would have thought it high treason not to contribute to the general harmony; and on the part of Teddy, who sang rather worse than Polly Wynn. Mr. Ubbs did not sing, and apologized for a bad memory, and no tune in him; Mr. Wynn, senior, would have sung, "Heigh ho, Tantivy!" if he had been asked, and, had it not been his grandchild's birthday, would probably have resented the slight. Down in Warwickshire every Saturday night, at the "Sir Guy's Arms," that "Heigh ho, Tantivy," had been a triumphant success.

"I hope that you are enjoying yourself, Mr. Ubbs?" asked Martin.

"I—I never remember spending so nice an evening. It's delightful!"

Christie had crossed to Teddy by this time, and was looking him hard in the face.

"I wonder what makes you so dull, Teddy?" she said—"do you mind telling me?"

"Well, Miss Christie," he answered, "upon my honor, I'm not dull!"

"Why, you haven't laughed once to-night, and we all like to hear you laugh."

"Ah! but I'm very happy. To sit here in a corner watching you all, is always to enjoy myself thoroughly."

"Happy in watching others' happiness—do you mean that?"

"If it does not sound sentimental," replied Teddy.

Every body being happy, then, rendered the evening a happy one. Little birthday-parties, family reunions like this, were quite events in the lives of these quiet people. They were sensational meetings, looked forward to, and looked back upon—breaks of sunshine upon gentle lives, that were too pure and peaceful in their monotony for the monotony to be observed. We, of a faster order of creation, can afford to laugh at these honest folks's ideas of spending an evening; we, who are *out* "a great deal," and "very gay"—when we are out, dancing the fandango, perhaps, to a castanet accompaniment—may wonder very much where lay the enjoyment of Mr. Wynn's party. But there was considerable enjoyment, nevertheless, in Griffin Street; and Teddy was happy, as asserted, only it was a graver kind of happiness than he usually indulged in, and so had puzzled Martin Wynn and Christie. He had made up his mind long ago always to be happy in that house—happy as he was grateful—and he had tried very hard of late years. He had succeeded, he believed, and we will take his word for it. Therefore, Teddy Fernwell *was* happy that night.

The party broke up at an early hour. Mr. Wynn, as bound by contract at Henwood's Wharf, left at half past eight, conveyed by Polly, Ground Street way; at ten o'clock all these early birds assembled in Griffin Street were preparing to flutter to their nests. Supper was over; Teddy, hat in hand, was bidding them good-night; Mr. Ubbs, who had waited for a precedent, was ready to follow suit.

"I am going your way, Mr. Fernwell," Mr. Ubbs had said, to Teddy's astonishment; therefore Teddy waited for Christie's young man, and they both went into the street together. Teddy looked upon Mr. Ubbs as a superior being to himself, and was flattered by the offer of his company. He went to Martin Wynn's chapel, and knew well enough what Mr. Ubbs was thought of there; and though Mr. Ubbs was friendly in his manner to him, and had not a particle of pride in his composition, still he awed Teddy at times by his goodness. For the young man of the name of Ubbs had been good from his cradle-side, and behind that young man of the name of Fernwell *was* the shadow of which he had complained, and it would always keep him in his place, he knew. Grateful, intensely grateful for his change in life, and to those who had been the cause of it; but feeling an inferiority to all denizens of his new world, succumbing to them with readiness, and making all the room for them they wished. Ever in the background, then—as he had told Martin Wynn and his brother Zach—the shadow of the prison!

"You are going straight home, Mr. Fernwell?" asked Mr. Ubbs.

Teddy answered in the affirmative.

"I will go your way, then. Do you mind taking my arm?"

"If you don't mind taking mine—oh! no."

In this amicable conjunction they went on together, Mr. Ubbs coughing several times in the vain effort to clear his throat of the bung. Mr. Ubbs was somewhat embarrassed, and Teddy, quick to observe every thing, saw that at once, and resolved to help him.

"It has been a capital evening," he said.

"Very."

"Always sure of a pleasant evening at Mr. Wynn's—there is every thing to make things pleasant there," said Teddy.

"Exactly so. Mr. Wynn, and Mr. Wynn's daughter, very amiable, bright, kind, and so forth. You know, Mr. Fernwell, why I call there very often?"

"I can guess, sir."

"It's no secret—I never liked any secrecy about my actions, and I have no one to please but myself, now my dear

mother has gone. You know as well as the rest that I'm thinking of marrying Christie Wynn—I'm proud to be thinking of it, really?"

Teddy nodded.

"Well, the strange part of it is, Mr. Fernwell, that—that every body seems to know what I *am* thinking about, except Miss Wynn herself. It's very remarkable—I never heard of a case like it, did you?"

"No, Mr. Ubbs."

"And if I thought that I should not be accepted in that quarter, or that Miss Wynn adopts that peculiar manner on purpose to keep back any expression of my feelings, I should feel it my duty to withdraw without paining her by any rash proposal. I would not be rash, for all the world. Therefore"—this was a long speech, and required a fresh supply of breath, which Mr. Ubbs took before proceeding farther, took with a gurgle, a gasp, and a contraction of the chest—"Therefore," he continued, "I thought it more kind to her—whom I wouldn't pain by a word—to come a little way home with you to-night, and ask you all about it."

"Ask me!" repeated Teddy. "Oh! I know nothing, sir. It's beyond me to give any information."

"Oh! no, it isn't," said Mr. Ubbs. "Am I walking too fast for you?"

Teddy, who had been accommodating his pace to the short steps of Mr. Ubbs, who took about twenty steps to the yard, and those on tiptoe, answered "No!" very decisively.

"I thought that you slackened your pace."

"I pulled up short, that's all."

"I beg your pardon, Fernwell," said Mr. Ubbs; "it was my mistake, no doubt. Now, you can give me information, because you are there every day; you see Miss Wynn and her father very frequently, and I am sure you can tell me if she ever—ever—ever mentions my name to her father, or is thoughtful when it is mentioned, or even if—if there's any body else who calls sometimes, and for whom she may have a little liking?"

"I think you should ask all these questions of Mr. Wynn himself," said Teddy, bluntly.

"I have—twenty times. I have his consent—he's a dear, good fellow—"

"Ay! he is!" interrupted Teddy.

"And I have asked him, but he only laughs at me, and calls me highly susceptible, and dreadful names like that, and refers me to Christie. But, Mr. Fernwell, I don't want to shock Christie before I am certain of the state of her affections. Fancy," he said, breaking out into a cold perspiration at the thought, "being told that you can't be loved, and that there isn't a thought of loving you any where. My goodness!"

"I can not help you, Mr. Ubbs—I wish that I could," said Teddy, thus appealed to. "I am the last man in the world to know the thoughts of Martin Wynn's daughter. No one calls that I am aware of; she speaks of you, now and then—there, that's all the information I can give you."

"Thank you," said Mr. Ubbs again; "but when she speaks of me—does she change color at all?"

"Not a bit," answered Teddy.

"Ah! I thought not," said Mr. Ubbs with a sigh, "it was not to be expected. But she speaks of me occasionally, though?"

"Yes."

"What—what does she say about me, now? That I'm too quiet, or any thing of that kind? I knew a man who told me, to my face, that I was a milk-and-water creature. She doesn't make any fun of me, I hope? Girls will, you know, sometimes."

"She says how good you are to the poor, and how interested in them."

"She likes me for that? I'll go down to Drag's Court to-morrow."

Teddy winced, but recovered himself at once.

"Yes, she likes you for that, at least, sir. Pardon me, but we all respect you very much for that."

"It is man's duty surely," said Mr. Ubbs; "we are told not to forget the poor."

"And the poor have need of help, lest they should run away into temptation in very despair. I wish I could become suddenly rich," said Teddy.

"You would help them too?"

"I would help them in the right way—for I know all about them, sir—what they keep back in their pride—the honest ones. But—I came from the very lowest, as you know, sir."

"My dear Fernwell, I don't know," said Mr. Ubbs. "Mr. Wynn has only told me of your business qualities, your cleverness at your work, and your industry. What you have been, doesn't matter much."

"Yes, it does."

"What you are—we all know and respect."

It was Teddy's turn to thank Mr. Ubbs, who, after that, darted back to the old subject.

"Then you know nothing more about Miss Wynn?" he said. "I'm very sorry. I had the idea to-day that you would enlighten me a great deal."

"You do not want any enlightenment, sir," said Teddy.

"What would you do in my place?"

"Why, speak out, to be sure," said Teddy. "She's frank, her father is frank, and they both like frankness in others. It's as well to know the best or worst at once, and I think the best is waiting for you."

"Do you, really!" cried Mr. Ubbs; "ah! I'm not sure of that. I wish I were, Fernwell. Every body tells me that I'm sure, for I make no secret of my intentions."

"I would not run about telling every body, sir."

"Why not? I'm proud—"

"Yes, you've said so. But Miss Wynn may not be proud of her name in every body's mouth—and every body opens it widely enough, even at chapel."

"Perhaps you're right," said Mr. Ubbs reflectively; "but I dislike any disguise. I will speak to Miss Wynn directly I can. You give me quite new hope, Fernwell. I shall be always grateful to you."

Teddy intimated that his assistance was not worth the thanks bestowed upon it.

"You'll wish me success, Fernwell, I'm sure."

Teddy was silent, to Mr. Ubbs's surprise.

"I said—that you'll wish me success?"

"Yes," said Teddy with a suddenness and energy that rather scared his companion, "I wish you success. She can't do better—she may be too good for you in some respects," he added, not too complimentary, "but she would be happy with you. She's not a vain woman, and she knows her duty—no one better. The best of daughters will always make the best of wives. I wish you success, sir, with all my heart—I am sure that you deserve it—I am sure

that you would strive very hard for her happiness in every way. What better luck can I wish Christie Wynn than that?"

He shook hands with Mr. Ubbs at the corner of Wellington Street, and parted with him abruptly. Mr. Ubbs had intended to cross Waterloo Bridge with him, but the suddenness of the movement had thrown him off his guard. He wished Teddy good-night, and saved his half-penny.

Teddy proceeded on his way, deep in thought. At the foot of the bridge a woman on crutches, from the dusky by-path of Lancaster Place, limped eagerly toward him—a woman ragged and forlorn, with her bonnet trailing off her head, and her shoes flapping on the pavement, in true slipshod beggarly fashion.

"Oh! sir, six children all down in it at once, and my husband out of work, and no bread to eat for four-and-twenty hours."

"Yes—I know," said Teddy absently.

He knew all about that cry; in the ring of the voice he detected the true professional whine. The woman did not understand his reply, and went on with her complaint—

"They're all at Lambeth, sir, and I haven't a ha'penny to cross the bridge with. Will yer give a poor cripple a ha'penny to cross the bridge?"

Teddy gave the half-penny as requested, absently enough still, and then paid for his own entrance on the Bridge of Sighs. He added his sighs to the regrets that had gone before there—standing in the recess for a while, finally kneeling on the stone seat and looking down into the water. A dark night, a murky close night for May; a night when a man might feel lonesome watching the sluggish tide stealing on under the arches. He had spent a happy evening, he had told Christie, but the happiness had vanished in that hour, or something had risen to his mind to disturb him after the genial presence of the Wynns had been withdrawn.

He seemed to have a great deal to consider; he pushed his hat from his forehead to the back of his head, and looked none the wiser for the alteration; he clutched his chin with his hands as he knelt there, and stared straight across the river at the wharves on the Surrey side, where Henwood's warehouse, gaunt and stolid, reared its five stories in the distance. But he was not thinking of the Henwoods or of

the watchman at the wharf at that time, but of himself—which was a bit of a novelty—of his own future, and the hopes born with it. What he was working for, or whither those hopes might lead him, could not be guessed from the grave, almost stern expression of his face then; in the faint light of the gas-lamp near him, it was a fine, thoughtful countenance, and all its imperfections were subdued by the night.

He was still thinking, idling or watching, when the beggar-woman stumped into the recess of the bridge, and began a fresh complaint.

"For the love of Hiven, sir, a penny for a loaf of bread. Walked from Liverpool—doing it by twenty miles a day on these ere crutches—to see a sister in the horspital, and dead as a nit, sir, when I got there."

"Lucky sister," said Teddy, turning suddenly upon the woman, "to be quit of this world, if it was like yours in any way."

"On'y a penny, sir—"

"To help you back to Liverpool—eh?"

"It won't go far, but I'll be werry thankful."

"Thankful to desert—to give the go-by," he corrected, "to all the kinchins lying on the flats of their backs in Lambeth. Why, mother, if you don't try a better lay than this, and do it better, the game won't pay!"

Teddy, drifting back into his old slang, turned to the woman suddenly and quickly.

"Oh! I didn't know yer."

"Know me for a pal—perhaps not. Do you know me for a friend, years and years ago?"

"Eh?—who is it? I'm not as cute as I used to be—I never knowed yer."

He brought his face still closer to her.

"Teddy," he said in a low voice.

"No!—never!—is it? What, Teddy Fernwell, the boy I nussed?—why, save us! what a man yer are, and with a black coat and hat, too, like a lord. Well, I wished yer luck, and, s'help me, but I'm glad to see it. This ain't like the old times, boy."

"No—they have gone back—I don't belong to them," said Teddy; "you are," with a shudder, "just the same. Can't you do better?"

"Lor'—I likes it! It comes easy enuf, Teddy—and it hurts no one."

Teddy sat down beside the beggar-woman.

"What has become of all of *them*?"

He ran over several names hurriedly. Dead, transported, gone away, and left no address—all gone!

"And Fernwell—my father?" asked Teddy, "his time is up—has he been seen?"

"I ain't seen him, and don't want to. But tell us about yerself—it's as good as a play to meet the likes of yer," and she clapped her hand familiarly on Teddy's shoulder.

Teddy shrank; regretted, perhaps, that he had been rash enough to claim past relationship with this woman. He had been more thoughtless than his wont, and it was an act of recklessness to conjure back even this grizzly spectre from his past. The woman detected the spasm of regret—possibly of disgust.

"Oh! the likes on us!—oh! the sight of grandeur that Teddy's took up, and that turns him agin the woman that was like a mother to him!"

"Yes, yes, you were a mother in your way, at that time," said Teddy, as he rose to his feet; "I should have died, red-handed, if it hadn't been for your care—and I was nothing to you then. I am not better than yourself, for I am an impostor!"

"Eh?"

"Here, let me shake you by the hand—you are one of the old friends, woman—the only one I had once. Are you poor?"

"Holy wars!—Teddy asks if I'm poor!"

"Can't you get any where out of the streets?—into the Union—"

"Who?—I?—the Union! Why, Teddy, there's the prison afore the House—that's where I shall settle, s'help—"

"No—no—think it over. You are an old woman—the end of your journey, with the Judge waiting—here is money—it may help you—get away, get away—God help you, woman, in His time!"

He pushed money into her hands, and strode away from her. A large sum for him to bestow—a sum that he had taken with him to purchase a birthday present for Christie Wynn, and then changed his mind, *en route*—five sovereigns

and some silver, that the old woman clutched with greedy hands, and gasped over like a madwoman, blessing Teddy between her spasms of exultation, and calling Heaven to witness how she had always said that that boy would turn out "the best and primest."

Meanwhile, the best and primest strode on to Upper Ground Street at a fierce rate of progression, as though he would outwalk the past, and the shadow of it which he had always feared, and which had fallen very densely upon his path that night.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRISTIE PROMISES TO TRY.

AFTER the guests had departed, a little dialogue ensued between father and daughter. While Teddy and the beggar-woman were speaking of the past, Martin Wynn and Christie sat down side by side to dwell upon the future.

Christie knew what was coming, and though her heart beat more rapidly, she did not shrink from the subject, but faced it like a brave little woman. The love between these two was a something very pure and intense, verging almost upon the "sentimental," against which both had protested a little while ago.

"Twenty years of age, Christie," taking her hand in his hard, horny one, "twenty years you and I together, without a quarrel—almost without a difference of opinion. I hope that I have been thankful enough."

"I hope that I have for my dear, large-hearted, wise-headed dad."

"Wise-headed!" said Martin with a laugh; "ah! very wise, to be sure—we'll have no flattery, Chris, at this time of night. But we'll have a little sober talk, you and I together, about Mr. Ubbs."

"Oh! dear—that is a subject that will keep till I am one-and-twenty—till I am of age, father."

"Ah! then you will be your own mistress and defy me, Chris. Now I have you—and I am really going to talk very seriously about this young man."

"And you require my serious attention?"

"To be sure."

"Then I'll compose myself, although he's such a funny man, with such a funny name tacked to him, that it makes me laugh to think of it."

Poor Mr. Ubbs! if the west wind could have wafted to him these words of Christie Wynn, he might have been less sanguine of the sunshine.

Martin's face expressed a shade more gravity after this.

"The sublime and the ridiculous verging on each other in real earnest, then," said Martin, "for in some things that man almost attains sublimity. I like a hearty laugh—it's a good thing, Chris—but I can't laugh at a good man."

"Don't look so grave, father—I will not laugh any more. He is a good man—I own that. When you look like that, I sometimes fancy what a hard, stern man you might be—almost unforgiving."

"Your mother made me less stern and hard, Christie," said Martin, his features softening. "But we will keep to one subject, please, and I will not say many words concerning it. I told you, a few months ago, all that had passed between Mr. Ubbs and me?"

"Yes."

"I asked you, Chris, to think seriously of this gentleman. I did not dwell upon his worldly advantages—though we have no occasion to despise them, for we are not likely to be rich people, or increase by many hundreds the little sum we have put by—but I discoursed seriously even then upon Mr. Ubbs's merits, his real goodness of heart, purity of thought, earnestness, and—godliness. That man I should really like you to marry, Chris."

Chris bent her head lower, and twined her fingers together in her lap. She assented to all the merits of the meek man who had been present that evening at her birthday feast; in her own way she admired him; in her own circle she had heard many anecdotes to his credit, but he was not the hero of her dreams—demure, dissenting maiden, with a soul above sentiment and romance, as she was.

"I do not suppose, Chris, that you have thought of any one else. You are too young, and, moreover—you would have told me."

"If I loved any one else?—yes—or if any one else loved me? Oh! yes, I think I should."

"Think!" said the amazed parent.

"I am sure—for I would not deceive you, or keep back any thoughts in which you could not share—except that they were the wild, foolish, unaccountable, absurd thoughts which we women have at times, and which would only tease you to relate. But, father," she said, "why are you in so great a hurry to find me a home of my own?"

"I would keep you with me all my life if I had only myself to study," was the reply; "I had a hope that no one would come after you until I was fifty or sixty years of age, and that you might be spared me all that time—but it was a foolish idea."

"No," said Christie eagerly, "it was not—let it remain with you, and let us keep together all our lives, growing old together like grandfather and Aunt Polly. I often think of those two lives, flowing on peacefully and happily, and wish no greater happiness than that for you and me."

"I see the chance you lose now," said Martin, "and I will not be a selfish father, at your expense. If my Christie ever marries, I used to say, she shall have for a husband, an upright, honorable, religious man, without a blot in his past to look back upon, or a fear for his future that may daunt her. The best man for the best girl of my acquaintance; or I will play the tyrant, and keep her from wedlock all her life. I thought that man would come some day—not in the early days like these—and coming here, I take his part, and welcome him, knowing what is best for Christie Wynn."

"But he is in a great hurry, I fancy."

"Only in a hurry to know whether he is sure of you, and may call you his wife some day. Knowing that, he will be content to wait your pleasure, and I for one sha'n't hurry you to the altar."

"Would he wait ten years for me?"

Martin could not refrain from a long shrill whistle at this.

"How fond you must be of him!" he exclaimed.

"You would not have me marry him until I was *quite* sure that I loved him?"

"I feel quite sure that that man is to be loved by any girl who sets her mind to it."

This father, with his feelings growing rusty from inaction, was as obtuse as most fathers on the subject of his daughter's

affections; handsome looks, graceful deportment, skill, courage and eloquence, were not taken into account with the suitor. Martin had ignored the money part of the question, he thought, and looked only to his daughter's happiness; but it had had its weight for all that, as money will have with people of forty years and upward. What would become of Christie, troubled him not a little, young father as he was still; he had been morbidly sensitive concerning her future protector—when she was twelve years of age, even, who was to marry her had been a subject for grave speculation.

"Well, I will try and love him—try my hardest," she said suddenly.

"That's right. And when he asks you—perhaps you'll tell him so."

"Yes," promised Christie.

But Christie did not know what she was promising—did not know her real thoughts, or would not believe that there were any real thoughts to scare her. Hers had been a quiet life—a smooth sea, and a prosperous voyage thereon—for she had loved her father, dutifully obeyed him, and known no troubles. She had an illimitable faith in Martin Wynn, and in what he thought best for her; and even now, with a strange yearning to rebel that seemed sinful, and with a strange objection to the suitor proposed that seemed unnatural, she wondered why she did not feel more grateful for all the father's interest in her welfare.

CHAPTER IX.

ZACH IN HARNESS.

ZACH FERNWELL, better known in his new world as Mr. Zachary Henwood, had settled down fairly to business, after his return from the Continent. His tutors set aside, his commercial life began, and it can be said to his credit that Zach began in earnest.

Traveling on the Continent is not the best means of training the commercial mind, or developing the City brain; but Zach had had a fine worldly, money-loving tutor to accompany him, and there were many lessons taught and incul-

cated on the journey that were profitable, in a worldly sense, to the pupil.

"Teach him the value of money," had been the one injunction of Mrs. Henwood, "and half the virtues under heaven will follow the teaching."

It had been Mrs. Henwood's father's creed, the father of that father before him; it was doubtful if Mrs. Henwood herself treated money with proper respect, she was too lavish, it was whispered occasionally—but at least Mrs. Henwood wasted but little money on other people, and wished Zach to be more careful than herself.

"You will have your bread to earn, Zachary," she said to him one day; "I do not intend to keep you in idleness, or leave you one farthing of my money. I shall place you in a good position—find you a post in my warehouses, where you will be paid according to your industry and vigilance—and then have done with you. After that, it will be your own fault if you can not work your own way; I shall have fulfilled my duty by you."

"And you may rely upon me always doing my duty by you, Mrs. Henwood—and in endeavoring to deserve your esteem and affection."

"I don't want any affection," she said languidly; "I don't expect any. It will please me to see you advancing in life—that's all that I can say. If you behave yourself, I shall ask you to dinner, now and then."

So Zachary, thankful for these favors, not too graciously accorded, left the house at Wimbledon, took furnished apartments near his business quarters, and went at business like a lion.

Zach went to the City wharf on the other side of the river, preferring that post to the Upper Ground Street premises, and calling at the latter as seldom as possible. In the City warehouse, in the counting-house where the clerks were, rattling about the City full of life and energy and intellect, Zach soon became a man to wonder at. He was born for business pursuits, it was certain; he knew the value of money, and the hard bargains to be driven with cash in hand; he worked as though his soul was in his mistress's cause. The clerks wondered why he strove so hard, so desperately hard at times; he had been placed above them—but beneath Mr. Tinchester, still the ruling agent of the

great wharves—and he worked them hard also, knowing no mercy. He was not a tolerant young man; in his business hours there was nothing youthful in him; his sharp eyes let nothing escape him in his field of action, and he would allow no ease in his presence, taking no ease unto himself. Still he was not a cruel task-master; he seemed only to require that justice should be done to Mrs. Henwood's work by those in Mrs. Henwood's service; and there were occasions when he spoke kindly to the servants, though it might be with a pen in his mouth and his brain full of far-away thoughts. He made no man his enemy; he constituted unintentionally many men his admirers, Mr. Tinchester among the number, who sang to his praises at Wimbledon when Zachary Fernwell was not there. Zach worked with a will, then; in the early days he had evinced an intense anxiety to master the business; mastering it completely before two months had passed over his head, and then setting to work to master the humankind connected with it—the City merchants who landed and bonded with the firm, and borrowed money on their goods now and then—the clerks—the subordinates and insubordinates mixed up with the house of Henwood—and the bankers who took care of the floating capital, and were always very civil to Zach, seeing great things in the younger "Henwood," and a propensity in him to rise.

Zach became still paler over his work; thinner and paler too, as though his intense application to business were trying to his system; but he never flinched; he worked right on like a slave under the lash—under the lash that Mrs. Henwood had held over his head. In his life he had given some signs of weakness, even vacillation; but it was not apparent here. He had mapped out his course, and there were no faltering steps, moral or physical, in the city life he had entered upon—it was a resolute, even a fierce face that was turned to the money-hunters round him.

He was first at business in the morning; the clerks found him there, poring over the books; and the junior clerk, retiring to his suburban lodgings, after clearing up the office litter left by greater men than he, putting all the books in their places, trying the drawers, and turning out the gas in the counting-house, left, as a rule, the slight figure of the junior manager bending over his papers in the full glare of the Argand in the private office.

"I think he will work himself to death," he ventured to say once to a fellow-clerk. "I never saw such a man to keep the steam up in my life! And he isn't older than I am, I know."

Zach was the last to leave, then—even then not to leave for home.

"He does keep orful hours, to be sure," his landlady, Mrs. Evvers, also curious about him, observed. "Coming in at all times of the night, raking and racketing about like the cats."

But he was not up at all times of the morning, for woe betide the landlady who was five minutes behind with his seven-o'clock breakfast. Sunday was chiefly his one day of rest—rest in the complete sense of the word, lying full length on the stuffy sofa, with his hands behind his head, looking up at the ceiling, like a man thoroughly tired out with the week's battle. The tutor of the past days had not inculcated church-going habits into this young man, or the young man had dropped them at once when free from tuition; for he let the church bells appeal to him in vain, as he lay there as quiet and almost as rigid as a dead man. Sunday after Sunday thus, rising for a five-o'clock dinner, and then lying down again, unless asked to Wimbledon. After his Wimbledon Sunday, a succession of Sundays in the old fashion, until July weather and the full heat of summer was upon him.

In July the landlady's daughter, Arabella, a slightly-made, but pretty-faced girl, with a fine opinion of her figure, which she was trying very hard to cut in half with stay-laces, ventured to affirm to her mother that it was her opinion that Mr. Henwood was "a-dying by inches."

"Good gracious! and a lodger that pays so punctually, too, though a little too partickler about his keys."

"He's like a ghost—a handsome ghost—lying there of a Sunday on that sofa. Oh! I can't bear to look at him!"

Which was scarcely a fact, considering that she had looked a great deal at Zachary from the corners of her eyes, and been interested in his eccentric manners, and watchful at doors, and through key-holes, after the habits of her class. Zach had always spoken very kindly to her too, and she was, therefore, doubly interested in Zachary, having heard in some romance or other that landladies' daughters were

the equal of their mothers' lodgers, and often struck up life-long matches, that turned out very happily. She was a girl with an honest desire to be married and settled in life—and no more nonsense with the chaps *afterward*. And possibly her mother encouraged this laudable desire, for she was a woman with many troubles, and back in her rent.

At all events, that very Sunday evening, Mrs. Evvers ventured upon a little talk with the lodger, and upon introducing Arabella's name into the discourse with considerable effect, after a random inquiry as to whether she should light the gas.

"Arabella do think, Mr. Henwood, that you're looking very ill—and Arabella's a cute girl as ever lived. Don't they give any holidays in the City?"

"I haven't asked for any," replied Zach, from his couch.

"I think if you took your holidays, and went to Gravesend, or Margate, where all the gentility goes in a rush about this time, it might set you up for the year. Arabella is inclined to think so too."

"Arabella is really very kind," said Zach; "but I can't afford the time, or the money."

"But you ain't well—quite well, I think, sir."

"Oh! yes I am—and mean to keep well."

Mrs. Evvers thought this profane, and departed. Zach rose from the couch, and looked at himself in the glass, when the door had closed.

"I don't see any difference," he said. "Take my holidays, indeed!"

Arabella coming in with the supper-tray shortly afterward was inveigled into conversation.

"What have you been frightening your mother about, Arabella?" he asked.

He called her very seldom by her Christian name, but when he did so she objected not—on the contrary, blushed and smirked a little more, and simpered too demonstratively, poor girl!

"Well, you really are not looking well, Mr. Henwood," she said; "and I could not help taking the liberty of telling mother so."

"You're very kind to take all this interest in me—and I so lazy and ungrateful. I'll think of my holidays, and of how glad you'll be to get rid of me here."

"I didn't say that," was the quick answer.

"Perhaps you meant it?"

"No—and I didn't mean it," replied Arabella, still indignant, and anxious to confute the foul aspersion; "and you know better than that, and this is only your game."

"Only my game! Well, that's it. I'm glad you don't want to get rid of me, Arabella."

Arabella lingered, and arranged slowly the plates, the knives, forks, dishes, and remnants of Sunday's small joint; but Zachary said no more, and she retired at last to brood upon all that he had said, and to tell her mother in the back parlor, like a good young woman, as she would have been, if she had not exaggerated all the details. Possibly she had contracted this loose habit from her mother, who was subject to exaggerations concerning the lodgers' tea and sugar being "out," the havoc that cats made with the ham, and the numbers of scuttlefuls that had been consumed in the winter's firing.

Zachary thought no more of the change in his looks for a while; he was young and strong, and entering on life—surely he could work with a will, and with the best of them! It was imperative that he should set his shoulder to the wheel. Presently, however, Mr. Tinchester took him aside and asked if he felt quite well—if he would like any holidays. He was entitled to a fair share of holidays; business was going on pretty well, and the smart, fatherly gentleman offered to do extra duty till Zach came back, all the better for his change.

"I don't care about the country, thank you, Mr. Tinchester," he replied; "and as I never felt better in my life, I shall not take any holidays this year."

But he altered his mind after the receipt at his lodgings in the New Kent Road of a small epistle, on pink note-paper, sealed in a pink envelope with pink wax. Arabella looked daggers at that epistle, when she brought it in at Zach's late dinner.

"It's been here all day—it came by the morning post, after you had gone to business."

"Here all day, eh!" and Zach looked very attentively at the envelope, turning it over and over in his hands, and critically examining the seal.

"I s'pose you don't think, sir, that any body's been try-

ing to open it?" said Arabella; "or that any one's curious about your letters, or the *ladies* that send them?"

Arabella was certainly out of temper, and highly indiscreet, forgetting her place and the lodger's. But flying compliments—those trifles lighter than air, which condense themselves into leaden bullets, if one or another of the players consider them trifles no more—had been interchanged pretty freely during the last week, and in Zachary Fernwell's leisure hours. And when Arabella had begun to think that she had not set her cap, or taken in her stays another reef in vain, it *was* hard to have a pink-glazed envelope arrive, with Zachary Henwood, Esq., inscribed thereon, in a fine lady's unmistakable scrawl.

"No—I don't think that you would open my letters, Arabella," said Zach; "I have too much confidence in you to suspect such a thing."

"I hope you have."

Zachary broke the seal and read attentively the contents of the letter. There was a great deal to say evidently, for the letter took time to peruse, and had to be held sideways, and diagonally, and then upside down, to fathom the intricacies of crossed lines. Whatever could a lady have to say to him at that length? thought Arabella, with a sinking heart—thought so deeply, too, that she dropped a plate upon the carpet, splitting it in half. Zach looked up.

"I shall not want you any more, Arabella," he said; "every thing will do very nicely, thank you."

"It's—it's no bad news, Mr. Henwood?" she blurted forth—"I hope it's no bad news?"

"It's not of any consequence." Zach tore the pink note into fragments as he spoke, and Arabella's spirits went up twenty-five degrees. That morning Zachary took Mr. Tinchester aside.

"I am not feeling well, sir; I find that I have really been working too hard, and I think that I will take your advice about a change."

"It's necessary for every body, my dear Zachary," said Mr. Tinchester; "you are right enough. Take a month to begin with—we're rather slack at present."

"We'll say a month; but if I feel better, I shall return to my post at once."

"Where shall you go?"

"To Margate, probably—I want a bracing air. Good-by, sir."

"Good-by, Zachary. A pleasant holiday—I need not ask you to take care of yourself."

"I will do my best to keep out of mischief," said Zach, with a smile.

Zachary went home to pack his portmanteau, to busy himself with a few minor arrangements before he apprised his landlady that he started for Yarmouth on the following morning, before any one was up in the house.

"Hadn't we better get you a bit of breakfast, Mr. Henwood," she said, "afore you go?"

"It's an early train—half past five from the Shoreditch Station, Mrs. Evvers; I must get something down the line."

"Oh! that is early," said the landlady, who objected to early rising on principle.

But at four in the morning, breakfast was ready for Zachary in his drawing-room, and Arabella Evvers, somewhat pale and red-eyed, was waiting for him. Zachary, entering his room, was surprised and pleased at this attention.

"Why, this is very kind of you," he said.

"As if I was a-going to let you leave us for a month without a mite of any thing to eat inside you!" said Arabella; "there's the tea, and here's a rump-steak that I got over night, Mr. Zachary."

She had not ventured on that Christian name before, even with a formal prefix to it, but she thought that the attention bestowed upon him deserved the privilege; and, besides, he was going away for four long weeks!

Zachary thanked her, and proceeded with his breakfast, giving Arabella several directions, meanwhile, as Arabella lingered in the room, under pretense of dusting tables and chairs, and arranging window-blinds.

"Send all my letters, Arabella, to Post-office, Great Yarmouth, there's a good girl," said Zach.

"Pink letters, and all?" added Arabella, archly.

"Every thing, even to the circulars from that dentist round the corner, who thinks that New Kent Road requires its teeth stopped once a week with his patent flexible enamel—that charming dentist with the big whiskers, Arabella."

"I'm sure I don't know any thing of the dentist," said Arabella, tossing her head, "or of his whiskers either."

"Ah! it's all very well to tell *me* that."

"If he chooses to stare in at our parlor windows every time he passes, *I* can't help it," said Arabella, anxious to impress Zach with the fact that the dentist *was* interested, at least, in somebody at that house.

"No more can he, poor fellow."

Arabella blushed vividly—even indulged in a feeble little giggle, despite the lowness of her spirits that morning. They were lower still when he rose to depart, and caught up his portmanteau by the handle.

"That's very heavy, Mr. Zachary," she said, looking at his burden; "it seems as if you were going away for good."

"We'll not think of any thing so horrible."

"And here's the cab that you ordered last night," she said; "oh! dear, it is like going away in earnest now."

"You advised me to go, mind."

"No, I didn't—it was mother."

"Well, good-by, Arabella—take care of my rooms till I come back again, and don't let that big-whiskered fellow who deals in teeth cut another fellow out without due notice."

"Go—od-by, sir."

Arabella put her hand in his, and looked down with eyes full of foolish tears; she did not want him to see them if she could help it, she thought at one moment, and then she fancied the next that they would look nice if he did.

"Good-by, then. Going away for a month, Arabella—perhaps to be smashed up going along!"

"Oh! good Lord, sir, don't talk like that!"

"Going away for—a whole—month," he said, very slowly and decisively, drawing her toward him, and advancing his face to hers until their lips met. "There—don't tell the dentist!"

He strode away like a conquering hero after that; in the cab that bore him to the station he sang a French song that he had learned on the Continent, an instance of high spirits very unusual in Zach Fernwell; but in the third-class carriage—he was economical, and saved money when he could, and when appearances would not tell in his disfavor—his face settled itself into its old expression, cold, resolute, even defiant.

He thought no more of Arabella—full of tears at home,

and yet happy in her tears, thinking of what had happened, and what might happen in the days to come, when he returned with his heart all the fonder for his absence from her. She went into her bedroom, all in a flutter, to look at a lock of his hair that she kept in a secret drawer among a packet of old love-letters, half a dozen pomatum-pots, two bottles of scent, several pairs of soiled kid gloves, some old curl-papers, and a screw of rouge. A locket of hair that Zachary had never given her, but which was the result of collections—two or three hairs at a time from his brush on the dressing-table, and five or six hairs latterly, it being moulting-time with her hero. A tolerable lock of hair now, carefully tied with blue ribbon, and looking romantic and impressive enough. Here, like a maiden love-sick and forlorn, sat Arabella with her prize, until the parlor lodger, an old gentleman with the gout, scuffled down stairs at eight o'clock, slipping on the last flight into the tray that Arabella had left "for a moment" on the stairs, and swearing awfully in consequence.

Arabella told her mother the greater portion of the news that morning over breakfast, with a fair portion of Zach's rump-steak warmed up again for the occasion.

"He could hardly eat a bit after all," she said, "his heart was so full. And he—he said that the dentist wasn't to cut him out—as if that was likely, mother!"

"He shook hands, o' course?"

"Yes, he shook hands with me," said Arabella, blushing at the reminiscence. There are some incidents which maiden reserve shrinks from telling even the mother, and she was not quite certain what the mother would think of it all.

"I s'pose he never talks seriously to you, Bella?" asked Mrs. Evers; "not as if he meant it?"

"There's many a truth spoken in jest, mother."

"Young lodgers air werry fond o' their larks," remarked the landlady; "but you're a gal that can take care of herself, and properly demean herself. I ain't afeard of *you* making yourself a fool about any lodger in the world."

"No—you needn't be," said Arabella, proudly; "I respects them as respect me—I'll have a little bit of that corner fat, mother."

"He's a quiet sort of young man—well off, I dare say—

that Chump sells a capital steak, Bella, though I don't see where the pound and a quarter is."

"Mr. Henwood ate some, of course."

"I thought he could hardly take a bit, you said," grumbled Mrs. Evvers; "why, he must have eaten like a horse!"

CHAPTER X.

ZACH OUT OF HARNESS.

BEFORE one in the afternoon of that day, Zachary Fernwell was in Yarmouth, and on Yarmouth sands. He had selected his hotel on the quay, an out-of-the-way place for a visitor not connected with the shipping interest. In possession of a fair salary—even of a very handsome salary for a young man of his age—it was his policy to adopt the economical, for reasons that will hereafter appear. It was his pleasure also, for he knew the value of money, and the power of money, as befitted a youth whose training had not been neglected.

He was on Yarmouth sands before one in the morning then, and the weather being fine and no wind stirring, the visitors had turned out *en masse* to enjoy the day, and make the most of their morning dresses. There they were, these people, resting from the cares of fashion and business, and from cares not born of either, and so all the more difficult to escape, heaped on the deep sea sand by thousands, running over parade and piers and jetty; crowding round singers, players, organ-grinders, and performing monkeys; bargaining for fossils and for the next turn in the bathing-machines; sailing forth in the yawls triumphantly, coming back in the yawls despondently, after the manners and customs of the English. Zachary stood with his hands behind him on the parade, watching this panorama, closely watching it as for a face, or faces that he expected there. Very quiet and observant was this keen-eyed man, letting but little escape him, noting every incident—and those attracted by it—that varied the scene on that bright morning at the end of July. He moved from his post of observation at last, and went on about fifty yards, to pause again, and survey the new phase of society presented by his change of ground. An ex-

cursion-train from Norwich had arrived, and there was a stream of nondescripts, bearing baskets and babies *en avance*, coming down the opposite street toward the sea, whooping and gesticulating with delight, as men and women from shop counters and street corners are in the habit of doing.

Zach went on again, to pause again on the right of the Wellington Pier, and look at crowd number three, a smaller crowd, that evidently disliked noise, and had fled the brass-band and the sweetstuff man, who spent the days of his life bawling "Beautiful Rock," and the boys with the tarts, on which the sand was drifting, taking fifty per cent. off the flavor, and adding a grittiness that set the teeth on edge. Here Zach's quest came to an end, for he had backed suddenly and hastily, after holding up his walking-cane—a gold-headed cane, which had been Mrs. Henwood's present to him. This signal having been made, he crossed the road and waited patiently, with his back against the railings of that admirably-conducted institution, the New Assembly-Rooms, in the grounds of which some pretty girls were playing croquet. Here he remained till a counter-signal was made to him, which took him once more across the road, toward the Nelson column. On this new parade there were but few visitors; two old ladies, a nautical gentleman with a telescope, a sick lad progressing slowly in a bath-chair, and a tall young lady with voluminous skirts, a pork-pie hat, and a white wing-feather. This young lady was evidently the object of his search, although he followed, and did not approach her until they were a considerable distance from the town, and the murmur of the crowd had been replaced by the hoarser murmur of the sea.

Then he approached to her side, and the lady held her hand toward him.

"You have come, then, Zach?"

"Yes; could I do less than come?—was not your note an invitation, Lettice?"

"Scarcely."

"I construed it so," he said; "and my inclination assisted me to put that interpretation on your missive. Is this a dangerous step?"

"I don't know—I hope not."

"It must be a singular coincidence," said Zachary, with a

laugh; "I have been recommended the air of Yarmouth for a change. I really am not well, and my looks will not belie the advice that I have received."

Lettice looked anxiously toward him.

"Yes—you are ill."

"Only with suspense, excitement, the restraint that is upon my lips, and keeps me plotting and scheming for a happiness that should come to me more naturally."

"Hush!—don't speak so loud! We are not quite alone here."

They went on silently together for a hundred yards or more, then Lettice Henwood stopped.

"If we strike across here toward the race-course, we can talk quietly enough. I have a great deal to tell you," she said.

They left the parade and went across a sandy patch of grass—grass struggling with sea sand for its life. Here, where the land dipped, they set their backs to the slope, and composed themselves for a *tête-à-tête*.

"I must not stay too long away," she said. "I have promised to be home at two to luncheon. I am supposed to be shopping in King Street by this time."

Zachary laughed, but Lettice Henwood's lips were only compressed more firmly, until she passionately exclaimed, "Oh, Zach, I hate this slyness—this constant and everlasting deceit—these strings of lies that I have to tell—playing the traitress to a woman who, with all her faults, may love me!"

"If she loved you like a true mother she would study your happiness more," said Zach.

"She thinks that she is studying it by striving for a good husband for me," replied Lettice—"by telling me that I am too much of a novel-reader, and too much of a student, to know what is best for myself."

"Does she suspect?"

"No. Suspicious as she is, you, at least, are not supposed to be an object of attention worthy Mrs. Henwood's daughter."

"My poor estate shields me, cousin," he said mournfully; "and yet she should have suspected me first of all. Thrown into your society constantly, related to you, seeing you at your best, and learning to love you with my whole soul, why could she not guess all?"

"You concealed your passion well," replied Lettice.

"I wish that I had the courage to tell her."

"She would expel you from the house—from a share in her patronage. Zach, she would sink you!"

"And if we were married? What is to prevent you and I walking into a church one morning, and quietly taking each other for better—for worse?"

"Would you risk poverty for me?"

"Every thing."

She shuddered.

"I could not bear poverty," she said. "I am fond of riches, like my mother, and display suits me. Zach, we need not bear poverty."

"No—she would forgive us?"

"She might, though she is very strange and stubborn, like her child."

"You stubborn!"

"Zach, it is all her fault," said the girl, whom we see now for the first time shorn of that languor and passiveness that deceived even her mother. "If I had had an affectionate parent, it would have been so different. Brought up to love the world and live for it—to act before it, as people on the stage act before an audience—to become fashionable and heartless—cold and calculating—to be turned over to the care of hirelings, and never to know what a gentle, loving mother was like—my God! to find as I grew up that there was little love for me—was it not natural that I should rebel?"

"When you found that I could love you, and share poverty with you, Lettice," added Zach, "then your better nature broke through the training that was reducing you to an automaton. But—I think that if we married, she would forgive us."

"Patience," said Lettice. "I will not marry yet, though I fear my future no more."

"Having confidence in me, why should you?"

"Having confidence also in myself," she added; "and feeling strong enough to hold my ground against the fools and idiots whom she would have me marry."

"No one need know of our marriage for a while. The business is at my finger-ends already—I have mastered its intricacies, and almost see my way to a future independent

of her, if she should cast us off. But, Lettice," he said more gently, "mothers only cast off their daughters in novels, and she is not very stern or very firm."

"It is her variable nature of which I am most afraid, Zach—but I have strength to meet her—and to foil her, if she oppose us."

"You wish me to ask her openly?"

"It is more honest—it is right."

"I have not the courage," Zach confessed; "I can not risk so much yet."

"You have not done well to venture here, then," she said sadly.

"I have no great fear of detection—and I came here with a hope to induce you to think more seriously, dear Lettice, of a secret marriage. Were we married, I could risk all, trusting in your mother's feelings."

"You are only twenty-one, and may change your mind! I am too tall for you, Zach—so awkward, and bony, too," she added, with a *naïveté* that told how charming she could be if she tried.

"You are all that is dear and precious to me," cried Zachary.

"Well, then, I am worth waiting for!"

She added this rather proudly, for she was a proud, though not a vain woman. She did not inherit her mother's love of self—scarcely, perhaps, her dead father's self-respect. But she was proud of her accomplishments—and not vain of her face. Years had not improved her looks; she was aware of that fact, and it had given her a morbid fear of being sought for her money, and then treated like a slave, after her money was secured. She had read much, and studied many things; she wrote a little, and found that the editor's compliments were not always followed by his "regrets to inform her!"

Lettice was a hard, intelligent woman, whose affections had been warped in her youth by a mother who did not waste much time over her, or even care to see her too often, till she had grown up less tiresome. Lettice had been thrown on herself and spoiled; a cold, repellent, unimpressionable woman every body thought her, when she was most romantic and most foolish. She was only a woman, after all, yearning for true affection, and despising the falsity that

was presented to her as true—seeing through it by her own strong perceptive faculties, she thought, when, after all, it was only the extra shallowness of a poor performer. She was young enough to be touched by Zach Fernwell's passion for her, and to believe in it, knowing what he risked by discovery, and thinking not at all of what he might gain. She parted with Zach after a few arrangements for his future steps—after a little more of that scheming against which she had protested, but which tinged with bright colors—bright and false as such colors always are—the life she was pursuing. The next day, on the sands, Zachary Fernwell advanced toward Mrs. Henwood and daughter, seated, under a shady silk umbrella, on the chairs that were for hire there. He had advanced close to them, before Mrs. Henwood looked up.

"My dear aunt—Miss Lettice, is it possible?—this is a pleasure entirely unexpected!"

Zachary, the reader perceives, had been versed in the art of lying with easy grace and natural effect, and we all know a few fashionable friends who excel in this accomplishment, though they excel not in any thing else.

"You—you here!" said Mrs. Henwood, expressing more surprise than gratification at her nephew's advent; "has any thing happened at the wharves?"

"No, madam. Every thing, I am happy to say, is progressing as satisfactorily and profitably as ever."

"Is this the extraordinary energy that Mr. Tinchester brags about? Young men ought not to think of idling their time away at watering-places."

"I told Mr. Tinchester so," replied Zachary; "I offered to give up my holidays this year; but he was kind enough to take an interest in my health, and to express a fear that I was working far too hard."

Mrs. Henwood looked more attentively at him—even began to move a little uneasily on her chair.

"You haven't been ill?—you haven't been laid up with any thing contagious?"

"Oh! no—I have felt a little mastered by over-work, that's all."

"Well, you might look better, certainly," said Mrs. Henwood, "but you need not have come to Yarmouth, where I wanted peace and quietness—absence from the least excitement, after the worry of the season."

Mrs. Henwood had been dancing her hardest only two nights since, at the Assembly-Rooms, on the special occasion of a ball to some officers of a man-of-war in the Roads; but she had forgotten that little variation to the peace and quietness of which she was in search.

"I was recommended a bracing air," said Zachary in reply, "and you did not write to me concerning your intention to honor Yarmouth with your presence. I thought you were above Yarmouth, in fact, and that it suited people of my station better."

"Yarmouth is a healthy place, or I should not be here. Why they put the healthy places in such nasty flat parts of the coast, I can't make out—it's very absurd! Not that it is a common place—Zachary," she hastened to inform him, "only on excursion-days. We have some very nice people here, and the resident families are worthy of our patronage."

Mrs. Henwood evidently thought that that was saying a great deal. Zachary continued to improve the occasion; he led his aunt into a variety of topics of conversation, taking but little notice of Lettice sitting by her side; he spoke of feeling better already for the change, and of starting to business again in a few days, if the improvement continued—he did not care to idle time away at his age. He spoke of the marvelous change that Yarmouth air had already effected on his aunt; he had seen, a month or two ago, that she was languid, and "not like herself," and he could scarcely believe that it was the same woman—rather a cousin of hers—Lettice's elder sister, let him say.

All this pitiable, for us standing aloof, to witness; we can deplore the moral decadence of this man, even in the high estate to which he had been raised. Pitiable on all sides this scheming, this flattery, this chronic vanity of a woman three-and-forty years of age; pitiable, even, for its naturalness—for the world these three lived in was false and gairish, and false things were indigenous to the soil. In Mrs. Henwood's world there was no religion, no care for truth, no care for any thing but position and appearances; the little good in each denizen struggled very hard to exist among the rank luxuriance that flourished there.

Mrs. Henwood succumbed to the flattery of her nephew, for he was clever in his flattery, and deceptive in his studied

frankness; and Mrs. Henwood was a woman not hard to deceive at any time, having faith in the praises of others. Zachary was asked to dine with them that evening at five—a friend or two, whom they had met, or made at Yarmouth, would meet him at that hour, and she should have great pleasure in introducing her sub-manager, she said. She spoke loftily and unnaturally, but she had the art of keeping Zachary in his place; and by many words, and in many ways, she had shown him long ago that she held herself aloof from him. She had done her duty by her nephew—she had done her best; but she did not love him, and, looking at him in his manhood, it did not win her sympathies the more to see how like he was to the handsome father she had known once. That father's actions brought no warning to her, or bade her be careful of her daughter; her daughter had been taught the value of position, and was not wild and impulsive as Zach's mother had been. Lettice, thank heaven! was an unimpressionable girl, not to be lured into romance by a handsome face and a few insidious words. Lettice knew what she might expect, too, Mrs. Henwood thought sometimes. The story of Zach's mother had been told her for the sake of the moral, and it had been implied that there were offenses against the Henwood pride which would strike a daughter's name from a will as easily as old Henwood had disinherited the woman who had died of want in Upper Ground Street.

Zachary Fernwell, however, did not believe in the stubbornness of Mrs. Henwood's nature; he was a keen observer, and he thought that if he could but secure Lettice, the mother would not cast them both off, and stand alone in the world. He could see that Mrs. Henwood was proud of her daughter, and he had great faith in time proving to her that he was fit for Lettice, and that to cast him off was to even materially injure "the business!" That last card would have its effect, he was assured, and turn the scale in his favor. He only wanted time. He believed that he loved Lettice very dearly as well, and that she was the one motive for his duplicity. He was sure that he was not a bad man; there were a hundred schemes in his head to benefit his kind, to be of service to his brother, Martin Wynn, every body, when the power was completely in his hands, and there could be no possibility of risk. Till then

he must be misjudged—that is the fate of all who soar upward, striving for prizes high on the tree.

CHAPTER XI.

MORE FRIENDS AT YARMOUTH.

ZACHARY FERNWELL dined with his aunt, improving the occasion once more. To Mrs. Henwood he was invariably deferential, even diffident, showing quietly that he understood the difference of position between them, and that even their relationship could not bridge it over. This manner satisfied Mrs. Henwood, and threw her off her guard; she had confidence in Zach and her daughter, and though there were occasions when upon principle she was watchful of them both, still as a rule the maternal vigilance was not exercised to the prejudice or discomfort of the lovers.

Zachary had been a week in Yarmouth without his aunt calling attention again to his stay there, albeit he had improved in health, with the broad sea before him, and business off his mind. It was fine weather at Yarmouth still, fresh, cool weather, that brought the baked-out Londoners, and the inland gentlefolk, to the Norfolk coast, running up the price of lodgings, and gladdening the souls of the cormorants who let them. The demand exceeded the supply; and Lowestoft, the sister town, though doing well, and considering itself far more genteel, grew jealous of the harvest that they were gathering on the lower ground.

There came to Yarmouth with the rest, Martin Wynn and his daughter. Martin Wynn had fancied that Christie was not quite so bright and well as she used to be; and though Christie protested that she was, and thought that she was, Martin had resolved upon a week's change; and with only an hour's notice, had left Teddy in charge of his home, and started with his daughter for Norfolk. Being a prudent man, he was disgusted with the prices asked for the few apartments left in back streets; but he closed his bad bargain on the instant—making the best of it, as it was his nature to do—and then marched his daughter at once to the sands, to find an appetite for dinner, if possible.

“I'll have my money's worth out of this place at any

rate," he said with a decisiveness of expression that excited a merry laugh from Christie, for he had brightened himself up especially to make this a pleasant holiday for her. He fancied sometimes that he had not studied her sufficiently, and that she had become a little dull in consequence; therefore this doting father was going to use his best exertions, to shake every particle of sadness from her mind. A very handsome man was Martin Wynn still, and as his portly figure and bright face appeared upon the sands, the visitors looked at him, as well as at his daughter. Martin Wynn dressed well, if not in style, now — dressed substantially, with an eye to wear and tear; and Christie was always pretty and graceful enough. On the sands that morning they were set down for a Norfolk farmer and his daughter, well-to-do folk, who had come to dissipate at the sea-side the fatigues of past harvesting.

"We'll have this all to ourselves, Christie," said Wynn, forgetting the folly of man disposing; "shutting the doors in the faces of intruders. You and I, as we used to be, when Stanley and Burns sent us flying to Paris in the old days."

"Why, we haven't been together — away from every body — for a long time now," said Christie. "What a holiday it will be!"

"I told Ubbs that we did not even want *him*," said Martin; "and he said that he did not think that he had a right to come, because—"

"Because I had not made up my mind to have him yet," concluded Christie. "Father, is this fair? Haven't we promised each other to think of nothing but the present here?"

"Ah! exactly," answered Martin. "I beg your pardon, girl—I stand corrected. I'll pay the penalty of an oyster supper, after our promenade in the evening, with the big-wigs on the pier. Only the present, and every body belonging to the past shut out for seven days."

"Why, who would have thought of seeing you here, Mr. Wynn!"

"Confound! — what, Mrs. Henwood!" said Martin. "Oh! good-morning, madam."

Mrs. Henwood, attended by her maid, was seated in her usual position on the sands, and had tapped Martin on the

shoulder with her parasol, as he passed her. Martin stopped, with his daughter on his arm, and looked his discomfiture too evidently.

"Well, are you not delighted to see the friend, and the *patroness*, again?" she asked, half in jest, and half with acerbity.

"I am really very much surprised," replied Martin. "I—I hope that you are well?"

"Quite well, thank you," said Mrs. Henwood. "Your daughter, I presume?"

"My daughter—coming down for the benefit of her health, Mrs. Henwood," he said, by way of introduction.

Christie bowed, and Mrs. Henwood graciously inclined her head. The rich lady was in her most amiable mood that morning, suave and condescending.

"I think I recognize the rosy-faced child who crossed the Channel with us in that dreadful storm," she said, turning to Martin.

"I don't remember a storm," answered Martin.

"Good heavens! man—did you not carry me senseless to the cabin?" she cried.

"Ah! yes—as sick as a dog, madam. Well, it was a little rough."

Martin shuffled with one foot in the sand; he was anxious to be gone, but not to appear in a hurry to depart. Since the lady had shown great taste in buying his cabinet, he respected her more. This was the second time that she had advanced in his estimation, the first being when she had adopted, almost at his own request, her sister's child.

"Do you intend a long stay in Yarmouth, Mr. Wynn?" asked Mrs. Henwood.

"Only a week—and Christie and I are going to make the most of that week—keeping 'ourselves to ourselves,' as the saying goes."

"Meaning that you do not want any intrusion upon your enjoyment," said Mrs. Henwood.

"Oh! we shall not be intruded upon here," replied Wynn; "our circle of friends is a small one."

"Select, I hope?"

"I have done my best to make it so," said Wynn, looking askance at Mrs. Henwood, and thinking that she was exceedingly frivolous that morning.

"Prudent man!—I find it a very difficult task; but then my circle is larger, and people have become intrusive nowadays. Your cabinet is well," she added.

"Ah! I'm glad to hear it," said Martin, lighting up at this congenial subject, and speaking of it as though it was a living and delicately constituted being. "I often think of it, and hope no clumsy hands about your establishment have the polishing or dusting of it."

"I see to that myself. You are welcome to look in now and then, and make sure that your handiwork is properly cared for."

"You are very kind," replied Martin. "I accept your offer with thanks for one day in the future."

"You, Miss Wynn," said Mrs. Henwood, turning to Christie suddenly, "should be very proud of your father's genius."

"I am very proud of him altogether," was the quick reply, made with glistening eyes.

Mrs. Henwood saw that it was truthfully spoken, noted the affection in the words, in the look toward that stalwart man by her side, and her jealous spirit rose at once, extinguishing all affability. Her daughter Lettice could not have spoken or looked like that; her child did not love her with so rare and precious an affection; this man had the advantage of her, and was to be envied!

"I fear that I am detaining you," she said, coldly.

"We were thinking of looking round the place before dinner," said Martin. "Are you ready, Christie, to bid Mrs. Henwood good-morning?"

"Good-morning," said Mrs. Henwood, without looking toward them; "possibly we shall see each other again before you depart for London."

When Martin Wynn was out of hearing, he said,

"I hope not! That woman always makes me feel uncomfortable—I don't admire her ways, and I always see over her shoulder my old father's face. That old gentleman will trouble me—"

"The past—the past!—and we are not to think of it for a week."

"Right you are," said Martin, brightening up; "this a memorable week for us—a jolly week, I may say, if we can but dodge the old girl with the false curls."

But the dodging was ineffective, for the next morning they met again, exchanging bows only, much to Martin's gratification; and again for the third time, in the evening, on the Wellington Pier, when Mrs. Henwood, fraught with a new idea, faced them with Zachary and Lettice, and, to Martin's amazement, went through a formal introduction of her daughter and nephew to them. Martin was somewhat near-sighted, or he would have never fallen into the trap; but his surprise recovered from, he did not regret the accident, forming a plan also with wonderful celerity to improve the occasion.

That plan concerned Zachary, who had changed color and betrayed a certain amount of confusion at his aunt's introduction; for he was as unprepared as Lettice or Martin for the meeting, Mrs. Henwood having maintained silence concerning the new arrivals in Yarmouth.

Mrs. Henwood was not inclined to part with Martin Wynn on this occasion—that would have interfered with her plans. She dashed into conversation with that easy fluency that long practice at inanities had afforded her, addressing Martin, Christie, her daughter Lettice, and Zach in turn, and by some means or other drawing all into one general topic.

She wound up with—

"But these musical evenings are very cold at Yarmouth, and sitting still to hear a militia band play out of tune is a rash experiment. Will you take my nephew's arm for a turn or two down the pier, Miss Wynn? Oh, thank you, Mr. Wynn—you and I can talk of old times together more pleasantly now."

Before Martin Wynn had thoroughly comprehended how it had all been managed, Zachary Fernwell was marching away with Christie on one arm and his cousin Lettice on the other, while he himself was left to the wharfinger's widow.

Zach was probably more surprised than the rest, although he disguised his astonishment sufficiently well. He was silent for a time, however, and Christie and Lettice felt a little embarrassment.

They were a gloomy trio enough for the first five minutes; then Zach exerted himself, and talked of small matters—sea air, Yarmouth bloaters, and visitors, and Lettice exchanged civilities across him, seeing that Christie was some-

what shy. Lettice, to Christie's surprise, spoke of their first meeting on board the Boulogne boat, when they were children together, and struck up a fleeting companionship; and Christie's courage returned as her awe for the young lady diminished. Zach was silent concerning the past; he thought it best. He did not know how far it was safe to venture on that dangerous ground; and he feared that the subject of his brother Teddy was scarcely a safe one at that time, and would assuredly embarrass him. Christie also was in ignorance how much or how little Lettice Henwood knew of the second brother, and remained silent also, though Teddy was a topic on which she would have liked to dwell for a while. The three, after a time, got on very well together; they had all three met in the past, and that fact speedily thawed the reserve between them.

Mrs. Henwood had by this time laid her groundwork, and began business.

"All this seems very strange to you?" she remarked to Martin as they set off arm-in-arm down the pier together.

"Very inconsistent is the better phrase."

"Why inconsistent?"

Martin went back to the time when they met first on board the Boulogne boat, just as Lettice went back to that period also.

"You were a prouder woman," he said; "and reproved me for my rudeness in addressing you, and in allowing my child to take the liberty of speaking to yours."

"I did not know what kind of man you were then," said Mrs. Henwood, "or what your daughter was like. Surely you do not blame me for being careful of casual acquaintances?"

Martin had not seen it in that light before. He answered, "No, I do not blame you—and I was more abrupt in my manner eight or nine years ago."

"You are exactly the same—I do not see any difference. Just as abrupt, or rude, or straightforward, or whatever you like to call it."

"Straightforward sounds more complimentary," said Martin.

"Still I am a little inconsistent—granted!" she said, reverting to his former verdict on her conduct—"it seems inconsistent to be walking about this pier with you, of all men."

"You are not in town, that's one thing," replied Martin; "and folk at the sea-side generally get a little of the starchiness rubbed out of them. I really think that you have improved for the better since the day we crossed the sea together. I did not admire your manner then, at all."

"Ah! I have bought a cabinet since."

"That's nothing to do with it," affirmed Martin.

Mrs. Henwood, was silent for an instant; she was approaching her first parallel, and it was necessary to ask a favor of this odd man, and obtain it, if possible.

"Since I saw you yesterday, I have been thinking a great deal of your daughter, Mr. Wynn."

"Indeed!"

"She appears to me a very frank and amiable girl—a girl somewhat different to the young ladies of my acquaintance."

"There's scarcely another like her in the world," affirmed Martin, always to be drawn out on this particular topic—"the most generous, the least unselfish, the kindest, and most thoughtful creature that ever made a lonely man's house bright."

Mrs. Henwood could not repress a sigh, although she affected to treat Martin Wynn's opinion lightly.

"You are a doting father. I wonder you have not spoiled her."

"I have been a careful father, too, I think."

"I have been a careful mother," was the reply; "I have spent no end of money on my daughter."

"Who, in her mother's opinion, is the best in all the world, too, I hope."

"That's it!—that's it!" said Mrs. Henwood, rapidly; "she isn't."

Mrs. Henwood became excited; and to grow excited was to drop the mask of artificiality.

"I am sorry to hear a mother—"

"Wait a moment, we are passing her. Take care of Miss Wynn, Zachary, until we relieve guard. Miss Wynn, do not believe all that young gentleman tells you, he's a sad deceiver," here the frivolous died out, and the serious set in again; "*she's* not a girl that is a comfort to me, Mr. Wynn, and I begin to feel that now."

"I wonder whose fault it is," said Martin, absently.

"Eh?"

"I was wondering if it were all her fault," repeated Martin; "it is impossible to say. Bad teachers, perhaps—bad example somewhere, certainly."

"I can't tell where. I have been the best of mothers. I have spared no expense."

Eternally harping on the money that she had flung away on Lettice's education, as though money were before love in developing the affections. Did she begin to feel now the want of a daughter?—the loneliness of her own future casting its shadow before her even then, despite her little mind, her love of pleasure and self?

"The expense is not worth a thought," said Martin; "money can not make a daughter lovable. She seems a very graceful, nice kind of girl. Intelligent, I should say."

"Clever enough," remarked Mrs. Henwood; "oh! there's no doubt of her cleverness. But she's eccentric and hard, and I want you, while you remain at Yarmouth, to allow your daughter to be her companion, all you can. I think that Lettice would soften—become more womanly, in fact—if she knew a truly amiable girl of her own age."

Martin did not answer at once. It was a strange request to come from Mrs. Henwood, telling more of the mother, and less of that mother's pride and reverence for position than he had hitherto witnessed; it was a request, perhaps, a little grateful to him, and flattering to Christie; but it was a dead blow to the enjoyment of his holiday, and the idea did not make his heart leap.

"You refuse me?" she said, tetchily.

"It requires consideration," he replied; "I do not see the advantage on our side of the house, at all events."

"You are afraid of your daughter taking a bad example from mine, perhaps?"

"No, I'm not afraid of that," said Martin, with a laugh; "I can set that idea of yours aside. I don't mind much," he added, "about my own holiday; and if Christie be happy with your daughter, why, so much the better. Companionship with one of her own age may be good for Christie too; and if you think that my girl can be any service to yours, let them be together. But let it all come round naturally; and if Christie object not—it all depends upon *her*, mind—or your fine daughter don't upset the dignity of mine, I have no objection to urge."

"You are an obliging man—I thank you very much, Mr. Wynn," she said, almost pressing his arm with her hand, by way of expression to her gratitude; "I wish that you had risen more high in your profession."

"Why?"

"We should have been more on an equality," she explained; "I could have sought your advice more frequently. My own adviser now is the head manager of my business—a clever man in business hours, but out of them no sense, no feeling."

"Ah!" said Martin, "you're coming round to the position question again, and that always aggravates me and spoils you. Granted that I am not a rich man, and that you are a wealthy woman—that your father was a great merchant, and that mine is a night watchman on your wharf, and a man I would pray you to discharge, if I were sure that it would not break his heart—still, if you're going to bestow upon me any of your pride again—that awful bumptiousness!—why, I shall start to Lowestoft in the morning, and be quit of you."

"Are you a Chartist?" asked Mrs. Henwood.

"Not exactly."

"You have such shocking ideas about equality—you don't seem to care for people's rank, and you talk a great deal like a Chartist, or a Socialist, or something of that sort."

"I may have caught the complaint in Paris," said Martin, dryly, "where *les ouvriers* do not worship rank, and explode all of a hurry when rank turns the screw on the liberties. Or," he added, more seriously, "I may have read in the Bible that riches are not valued in heaven, and that the beggar there will stand a better chance than Dives."

"I think your religion is worse than my pride," she said—"a religious man is something very terrible to me."

"You are not religious?"

"God bless me, no! I go to church now and then, of course, but I haven't time to be serious. When I am an older woman, I dare say that I shall give up the pomps and vanities with an easy grace enough. But praying always, and keeping away from balls and theatres, and looking upon every little pleasure as frivolous and harmful, as you dissenters do—I couldn't give in to all that!"

"Look here," said Martin Wynn, suddenly, "you want

your daughter reformed, softened, or something by contact with mine. We'll make a double job of this—I'll have a turn at your reformation."

"Very well. But you must not preach too many sermons."

Mrs. Henwood looked up into Martin Wynn's serious face, and laughed at him, shaking her side curls playfully. She was in a very amiable mood that night again—doubtless the sea air was beneficial to her. It was all very inconsistent, as Martin had said, and as she had thought, for that matter; but it was none the less charming for its novelty, and the rich woman could not look back upon a happier evening in her brilliant world than she was spending that night with Martin Wynn.

It was all very strange!

CHAPTER XII.

TWO DIALOGUES.

THE scheme which Martin Wynn had consented to foster seemed likely to prove successful in some of its results, at least. Lettice Henwood and Christie Wynn *were* drawn together by the very difference in their respective natures; there was a gentleness in Christie that was very winning, and there was a strangeness in Lettice that aroused Christie's interest. The same instinct that had drawn them together when children, seemed to exist again, and make them friends, almost in spite of themselves.

Martin Wynn gave a fair field, and no favor. He and his daughter met the Henwood party at every opportunity; there were long mornings on the sands together, long evenings on the pier. In the afternoon Mrs. Henwood's carriage would bring round Lettice to the lodgings in the back street, and whirl off again with Christie by Lettice's side. Martin was glad to see that his daughter lost that set expression, that new gravity, perhaps, which had induced him to bring her to Yarmouth, and he rejoiced secretly at the change. But Christie began to fear, however, that she was neglecting her father, and expressed that fear very speedily.

"I must not let these new grand acquaintances turn my

head," she said, playfully; "and I fancy that you and I had better escape them—go for a long day into the country together, and break the spell at once."

"We'll stay another week here instead."

Christie's eyes sparkled at this assertion.

"Is it not extravagant?" was her next thought.

"We'll chance it," answered her father; "you are happy here, I know, and I want you always to be happy. You like Lettice Henwood, too?"

"Yes, I like her. But how strange she is!—she seems full of little mysteries; I don't always understand her."

"If she's any thing like her mother, I'll warrant you don't," affirmed Martin.

"And oh! father, if Mrs. Henwood were not taking care of you so nicely, I don't think that I should have the cruelty to leave you."

"I have been trying an experiment with that lady," said Martin, "but it does not answer. She's too tough for me at present—I am afraid that it will be a failure. I have been trying to make her less worldly, and more pious, Chris."

"Indeed!" and Christie opened her large eyes to their fullest extent.

"I had an idea that I should succeed on that first night we met on the pier, but she has altered again since then," said Martin, ruefully; "I could sooner reform every beachman in Yarmouth—if he needed reformation—than that worldly, skeptical, half-witted woman."

"If she should make a convert of you, and teach you to love her and her money, father?"

Mr. Wynn laughed immoderately at this.

"I don't think that that idea will ever disturb her thoughts, or mine. I wouldn't have her, Chris, for fifty times her money; and I'm sure she is just as likely to marry my father as to think of me. What an odd remark of yours!"

"It was Lettice's—yesterday. Only spoken as a jest, of course," she added, seeing that Mr. Wynn suddenly became grave.

"She *is* an odd girl, then," asserted Martin; "I am not surprised that you don't quite understand her."

When the odd girl had called for Christie, and they had gone out together again, Martin Wynn thought seriously

of what had been mentioned as a jest. He thought of Mrs. Henwood, and possibly there might have stolen to him, for an instant, the temptation to try his chance for independence; for good men have temptations to resist, and Mrs. Henwood's manner was remarkable, if not encouraging. But Martin very speedily shrugged his shoulders in his French manner, leaned back in his chair, and laughed heartily at the absurdity of the whole story. After a while he shuddered at the obduracy and the eccentricity of the woman to whom his daughter and he had recently alluded; he had had several days' experience of Mrs. Henwood now, and he was a fair judge of character. He had found her more vain, worldly, and less susceptible to good influences than he had imagined.

He believed that she was half-witted, as he had asserted to Christie that day, or her actions would never have been so eccentric and unfathomable. A vainer man than he might have found a reason for it all, more especially after that afternoon's conversation; but he cut that reason out of his common-sense book, and laughed at its absurdity. Amid it all, he pitied Mrs. Henwood very much; he saw the solitude of her position, and how her own faults, her want of judgment, and the shallow-heartedness of her acquaintances had but left her splendid isolation. He could readily account for this strange mother possessing so strange a child as Lettice; but he was naturally too gentle to wound her by his opinion, for the evil was done, and the child was a woman. He could account for Zach's new nature, too; he regretted, for the first time, the advancement of that young man, who scrupulously shunned him as yet, and with whom Martin Wynn was resolved upon one discussion, before he left Yarmouth for good. He was very curious concerning Zachary Fernwell. Once or twice the thought came to him to tell Mrs. Henwood the whole story of Teddy's progress, so that one barrier between the brothers should, at least, be set aside, and one excuse the less remain to Zach for his unapproachableness; but he noticed that the brow contracted, and all sympathy died out of Mrs. Henwood's face, immediately he ventured a hint concerning Zach's brother and father, even though the former had risen in the world. She had had enough of one Fernwell, it was evident; that she did not love that one in any great degree

was still more apparent, and Martin thought that he was scarcely justified in periling Zach's position for the sake of a better understanding between the brothers.

"It is Zach's loss," he said, "and Teddy can wait."

He did not wait long himself for the chance of securing Zach for a listener; Zach had been isolated to a certain extent, by Lettice making a friend of Christie, and though his solitary walks helped to keep Mrs. Henwood in the dark concerning his future intentions, he was inclined to feel that he was wasting valuable time, and not gaining any ground. He rambled about the sands listlessly enough, and in one of these rambles, Martin having left Christie with her new friends, came upon him unawares.

Zach shook hands, and colored as usual. He was never at his ease with Martin Wynn, and his want of self-command annoyed him very much.

"Good-morning, sir," he said; "I am going for a long walk, Fritton way—a constitutional."

He was about to add a remark upon the general appearance of the day, and disappear, when Martin said,

"I will go a little way with you upon the road, if you have no objection."

"No—no," he said, after a moment's hesitation.

They set forth together then, making for the Regent Road, and the bridge across the Yar.

Zach's heart beat very fast, despite the stolidity of his countenance. No, he did not feel comfortable with this man; he had never liked him; he was over-good, and over-obtrusive, and there was something of the boy's fear that he had had for him still existent, to add to his embarrassment. He knew, too, what this man would dwell upon, and he did not see his way to a clear defense with him. Altogether, he was sorry now that he had come to Yarmouth.

"I don't know, Zach—if you will allow me to remain thus familiar with you—" Martin said; "that I should be doing my duty, if I were to leave Yarmouth without a word or two. It is no secret between us, at least, that your brother is in my service."

"No," said Zach, "or a secret now between you and Mrs. Henwood."

"Yes, it is," said Martin.

Zach was glad to hear this.

"It remains a secret, at Teddy's wish—for Teddy's sake—for your own."

"You see how I am placed, sir," cried Zach, softening; "it is beyond my power, as I have told him, as he sees, too, to act in a brotherly manner toward him. You can not blame me?"

"No—considering your teaching, Zach, I can not blame you. I do not care much to talk about the difference between you—I would rather look forward to the day when no difference shall exist."

Zach implied by a nod that he was looking forward also, but the action was not very energetic, and Martin saw that it was forced.

"If I had the time," said Martin, "I should like to speak more of your brother—of whom you should be very proud, for he is an honest and an honorable man. He has fought against every difficulty in his way, and has manfully made his way despite it—thinking of you in his progress, and holding ever an affection for you that is as pure as it is strange."

"Considering its object—yes, sir," said Zach, bitterly.

"I did not mean to imply that."

"Mr. Wynn," said Zach, turning to him almost fiercely, "I am a schemer—necessity has made me one, and I can not help it. As I told him months ago, so I tell you now—that I love him none the less, but I have not the courage to imperil my future by disobedience to my aunt's commands."

"Your aunt—though a nervous and a worldly woman—took great pains to raise you from the past estate, and you have a right to study her wishes, if scarcely in so great a degree as this."

"What would you have done in my place?" asked Zach.

"Oh! I," said Martin—"I should have given up the state for the sake of a brother as lonely as myself. I should have pitched all the gentility overboard, and shared my life with his, conscious that one would gladden the other, and hopeful that God would bless both."

"I think that some day I may benefit him more by proceeding my own course," said Zach.

"Or he may benefit you more—we shall see. You asked me for my opinion—I did not intend to force it upon you, unsolicited."

"You are a good man—I know it, sir," said Zach. "I have not the courage to follow the path you would map out for me."

"I do not advise you to attempt it now, with your thoughts fixed on advancement in the world. Mrs. Henwood told me that you were clever, and believing her—seeing it in your face, for the matter of that—I thought that I would venture to intrude upon you with an old friend's advice before I left for London. It is possible that I may not see you again—and I never like to lose a chance."

Zach waited patiently. He was glad that the subject of his brother was dismissed; it was a subject that pained him to dwell upon, and troubled the little conscience that was left him.

"I have a presentiment that you *will* succeed in the world," said Martin, "rise step by step to wealth—become as rich a man as your aunt's husband was, perhaps. You are cool, painstaking, and far-seeing, and I think must rise, unless you lose your presence of mind, and clutch too eagerly at greatness."

Zach started at this; it seemed a warning that was necessary to him, for he was anxious to be sure of his position, and his coolness was in part assumed.

"You will struggle to get rich—granted?"

"It is no mean ambition—granted also."

"In that struggle, then, do not, Zach Fernwell, let your mind narrow, or your heart collapse more than it has done," said Martin very earnestly; "struggle as much as you will, as hard as you please, but let it be an honorable fight to the end, trampling down no weaker man, and coveting no one's faster progress. In the struggle, it will do you good to think of that elder brother struggling also on a lower ground, and to pray for his success at times, as I am sure he prays for yours. It will do you good, too, to think of the dangers that you have escaped, and which I hope you thank your God for—it will keep that pride down, and stop it growing with you, to prejudice yourself, and all those noble impulses that should be natural to a youth like you. And when you are rich—" He stopped, and Zach stopped also to listen. Martin's words stirred all the good impulses that remained with him—for Martin was in earnest, and Zach not wholly callous. "When you are rich—think

again of your brother, who may need your help, and who may be in tribulation. After that, think of the poor—do all you can for them, you who know what struggles they have to live, and what temptations come to them from all corners of the earth. Seek them out—save them from a fate that might have been yours and your brother's—go earnestly to work, and let your good deeds strike home. There—after that, I'll bid you good-morning.”

And Martin Wynn very abruptly set his face the other way, and walked back to Yarmouth. He had preached quite a sermon, not without effect, he hoped—at all events he had done his duty, and given a young man, setting out in life with fair prospects, the best advice that lay in his power. He had a dim consciousness that that young man was impenetrable, or, at all events, if not wholly impervious, still a man whose mind was made up to rise—honorably, if he could, perhaps, but, at all events, to rise.

Zach proceeded on the Fritton Road for a while—suddenly stopping to consider all that had been said to him, appreciating the good motives that had forced Wynn upon him, and thinking that he would do his best to behave fairly to the world. He felt the better for the lesson for a while; it may be seen hereafter that he never wholly forgot it—for he was never wholly bad, only in some things unutterably weak.

“If Martin Wynn but knew all,” he groaned, “all that placed me in this position, for instance, would he have wasted so much advice upon me?”

The advice, he thought, after a time, was not fitting for him, for Martin could not see into the inner chamber, where so many dark thoughts were stored. When he thought that Martin was far enough in advance of him he turned back toward Yarmouth also, making many resolutions to himself—hoping some day that he might be worthy of a good man's interest, and thinking that the way to independence might be less tortuous and deceptive than he had considered it. And yet not his way—not the way he had marked out for himself, and was already pursuing! He stood on the iron bridge that crossed the Yar, as full of thought as Teddy had been upon the Bridge of Sighs some time ago; he leaned over and looked at the shipping, and then at the sailors on the quay, wondering if among the lat-

ter there was a man who had ever been as ambitious as he was. Leaving the bridge, he was suddenly accosted by a gray-bearded, gray-haired man, clad in a shabby suit of black, buttoned to the chin, and with a napless white hat, pulled very much over his forehead. The man looked upon the ground while he addressed him, so that it was difficult to see the face; but the voice at once chilled every drop of blood in Zach's body.

"I beg your pardon, sir—I ask ten thousand pardons for intruding upon you—but I am a man in deep distress."

"I have no money to give away," said Zach, forgetting already one portion of Martin Wynn's advice.

"It is a case of urgent necessity, knowing no law," persisted the man, speaking with great rapidity, and rubbing one thin hand over the other while he spoke. "A man who has traveled much, and suffered much, endured intense privations, and said little, asks you to have a little mercy on him. An old man, too—old enough to be your father, sir!"

Zach felt that he was recognized.

"What do you require?"

"As many pounds as you can spare me," he said, suddenly looking up, greedy and sardonic; "for I have had a long tramp after you, and I can not part with you, sinking all the paternity, for nothing."

"You are talking like a madman," said Zach. "What do you mean?"

He would make one stand for it, he thought.

"Your name is Fernwell?"

"No."

"Admirably denied! Say Henwood, then?"

Zach shook his head.

"A coincidence, then—I apologize," said the man, raising his hat politely, and speaking in a louder voice. "I have been watching the wrong man for the last fortnight, and you are not Zachary Henwood, sub-manager of Henwood's Wharf, manager on his own account of a most charming and secret love affair between himself and Mrs. Henwood's daughter."

"Silence, for God's sake!" cried Zach. "Where do you live?"

"In the Rows. Row No. 901—a cheerful apartment,

with a bad look out, and the ventilation not properly attended to."

"Let us go there."

"At once?"

"Yes, at once."

Mr. Fernwell took his son's arm, and they turned into a back street. He looked into Zach's face again with his own evil eyes.

"Candidly, my dear Zachary, would you have rather seen me, or the devil?"

"The devil!" was the frank response.

"Ah! such is filial affection in the nineteenth century! This way, *mon fils*. What charming weather we have had lately, Zachary!"

CHAPTER XIII.

ROW NO. 901.

THOSE of our readers who have visited the great town of Yarmouth will have no difficulty in bringing to recollection the numerous courts or alleys running between King Street and Gaol Street, Gaol Street and South Quay, King Street and Howard Street, Market Place and Charlotte Street, etc. Here congregate three fourths of the poor of Yarmouth, many of the fishermen, and all the vice that takes refuge in large towns, and finds such places as these rows capital hiding-places till "the breeze blows over."

All the vice in Yarmouth, after all, is not appalling; and the majority of these narrow, strong-smelling closes is tenanted by folk struggling very hard for a living, and struggling honestly too. A few rows have a questionable repute, however, and in one of these, at the time in which our story is laid, resided Mr. Fernwell. Calling at Row No. 901, then, we follow Zach and his father into as dark, dirty, and unwholesome a thoroughfare of three feet wide as a man of average nerve would have hesitated to enter in the daylight, and objected to at all hazards after nightfall.

"Men ascend and descend, Zachary," said Mr. Fernwell to his son, as they passed into the Row; "you rising nimbly to the top of the tree, and the father prostrate and broken

up at the bottom—where is the moral law of that, I wonder? Is there justice?—fair play?—or any thing in that?”

Zach did not answer. He was thinking of his next step, of what was best to be done under the disagreeable circumstances that had arisen. How far he should succumb to this unnatural parent—how far it would be policy to stand his ground and defy him.

At the open door of the centre house in the Row was afforded the information that “Jonas Tuggins, chimney-sweep,” lived there; which information Zach had also noticed was affixed at the corner of the Row, with an index hand pointing in the direction he had taken, and under which hand, to prevent mistakes, and Yarmouth seeking other chimney-sweepers, was inscribed a “DOWN HERE,” in Roman capitals.

At the door of this house was a sooty youth, home from business, and luxuriating on the doorstep.

“Erebus—Sam, I mean,” said Mr. Fernwell, “a bottle of whisky, Scotch, is immediately required. This gentleman will give you the money, and tell you that you may keep the change for all the trouble incurred. Borrow two glasses, if you can.”

The youth stared from Zachary to Mr. Fernwell, extending his grimy hand to the former, who placed money in it.

“This way—mind the first step, Zach, it’s broken; and then stride out for the third, for the second’s gone altogether.”

“Up here?”

“Yes, the top of the house. Ah! good-morning, Mr. Tuggins—business brisk, I hope?”

“When will ye coom wi’ the rent, now?” shouted Tuggins, in the Norfolk accent; “ain’t I had enoof o’ waitin’?”

“Directly, honest friend,” with a nod in the direction of his son; “can I say fairer than that?”

“Noo.”

Up the next flight; finally in a narrow and dirty room, the ceiling as black as Mr. Tuggins, the rafters grinning through it. A litter of shavings on the floor, a deal table, one chair, and a box of lucifers, the only furniture.

Zach sighed. It was the reflex of the old life; it struck home to him, this wretched room; the miasma in the place was not new; it belonged to Whitechapel, to the Drury

Lane courts, to all such dens as these; he could imagine that he had dreamed of better times now—of life at Wimbledon, life abroad, and the life of business, with the chances of success ahead of him—and that he had suddenly awakened in that sphere to which he properly belonged. Mr. Fernwell took off his hat, and dropped into a sitting posture with his back to the door, crouching there like a thing of evil as he was. The full light from the window fell upon his haggard face, white, seamed, and dirty, with every particle of the past handsomeness quenched out. He waved his hand with an easy grace toward the one chair in the room, and then clasped it with the other round his knees, and gently rocked himself to and fro, the master of the position!

"What do you want with me?" asked Zach; "why do you haunt me, and stand in my way like this? I have done you no harm—I have but wished for a better life for you."

"God save all my good-wishers! and that is a fine benediction," said Mr. Fernwell. "Sit down, Zachary, and make yourself at home. We have a considerable amount of business to transact."

Zach sat down thus adjured, and Mr. Fernwell, hearing steps upon the stairs, edged a little away from the door to admit of the entrance of the sooty youth with the whisky. The whisky-bottle was passed through, and with it one glass, minus a stem.

"They won't let no more glasses down this Row for no one," explained Sam. "This is father's—so take care of it."

"Every care, my shock-headed Ganymede," responded Mr. Fernwell. "Now, be off with you!"

He pushed the door to suddenly, eliciting a howl from Sam, whose fingers he shut in by the process; opened the door again to reproach Sam for his clumsiness; once more closed it, and set his back against it.

"You drink?" he asked.

"No."

"Not taking after father or mother. Saints of heaven! that is very strange," said Mr. Fernwell. "Well, I will not press youth to any indiscretion, though drink's a fine thing—a very fine thing, indeed. What should I have been without it?"

He drew a clasp-knife from his pocket, opened the blade, and with one dexterous movement of the knife against the

neck of the bottle, the cork, with an upper ring of glass attached to it, flew to the other end of the room.

"I enjoy this interview, marvelously, Zach," said Mr. Fernwell; "it is the scene which I painted in my mind's eye long ago, and the reality is keen and refreshing to me. I would prolong it in every way in my power—I would keep you here, a dearly-beloved son, forever, if I could. Your health."

He tilted a glassful of whisky down his throat, and then set the bottle down with the glass covering the broken neck to keep the spirit from evaporating.

"I'll not drink any more till business is over—I only wanted a stimulant, a spur; and that being applied, get the best of Richard Fernwell, if you can."

"Tell me in what way I can be of service to you—and let me go," said Zach. "I will not stay here long."

"You will wait my pleasure," shouted the father, losing his mild demeanor on the instant, and rising and lowering rapidly his goat's-hair eyebrows—"you will wait here till *my* permission is given you to leave. By —!"—he swore a fearful oath here—"things have come to a pretty pass indeed, when my own flesh and blood attempts to look me down!"

Zach was cool and collected now. He was in danger, but he had the power of steeling his nerves to hide all sense of fear, and his cunning told him the best way to hold his ground.

"I am not the boy whom you ill used, and would have killed at any time to serve your purpose. I am a man strong enough to resist your extortions, if I think it necessary; and I am not likely ever again to be your tool. But—God help me and you!—you are my father, and I will assist you so far as it lies in my power!"

"Very well," said Mr. Fernwell in milder tones. "I dare say we can arrange this little matter. I am poor, and you are rich."

"I am a clerk in my aunt's service—that is all."

"You will get rich."

It was the second time that day that that assurance had been given Zach.

"You will rise to riches—and then to greatness, for you know what is written in the Spanish comedy of 'Celestina?'"

Zach shook his head. He knew nothing of Spanish comedies; he did not care to know.

"'There is not any place so high,'" quoted Mr. Fernwell, "'whereunto an ass laden with gold will not get up.' I believe it; and I believe that there is not any place so low—this is my own idea—whereunto a clever fellow may not sink, if he get a taste for *that*. It damned me, Zachary, years ago!"

He struck the bottle of spirits with his hand savagely, and then scrambled eagerly forward to save it from falling, cursing himself for his stupidity.

"No, no, a good friend *this*," he said, changing his note to one of praise. "I said so before. I retract all hard words—I am fond of drink. Oblige me with that glass—it has rolled in your direction."

Zach pushed the glass toward his father with his foot, and Mr. Fernwell, securing it, filled it with whisky, and tilted the fire-water down his throat with his usual celerity.

"I am scarcely myself," he said; "this interview excites me. I am too proud of my prize—let me compose myself a bit."

Zach endeavored to wait patiently. He could not expedite his father's departure by resistance.

"I have not been much of a trouble to you, or your brother," the father began, after a while; "I have let you proceed your own ways, and interfered not with the great schemes of regeneration that have placed you both so much above the sire. I went abroad."

"I know it."

"Probably. The newspapers announced my intention of leaving England for seven years—public characters always find themselves in print. Candidly, my dear Zachary, I was resolving in my mind an admirable little plan for swooping down upon you, when the law swooped on me instead. So be it—I took my sentence, and I worked it out. Free of all demands, I come back here to begin a new life; and as I shall not offer to society any reasonable excuse for locking me up again, as I shall shun evil acquaintances, and, in a few words, keep out of trouble, why, I am safe. I sit here the picture of reformation."

He looked at the whisky-bottle, but resisted the temptation to replenish his glass—time enough for revelry when Zach had gone.

"What money do you want to keep away from me?"

"A yearly income—a percentage on your salary, rising with your own, so that I may the more heartily exult in your prosperity."

"I have a hundred and fifty pounds a year."

"It's a lie! You must have three hundred, at least; you are already a manager, and Mrs. Henwood has been extremely liberal."

Zach saw that it was useless to deceive his father on that point. His father knew all, it seemed.

"After all, they have not made much of you," sneered the villain, "when you can lie so readily as that. Why, I should not have taught you worse. My theory was to keep you ignorant and unlettered, trusting all to nature—see what art has done for you!"

"I will give you fifty pounds a year—I will send to you once a year fifty pounds, if you will keep away from London."

"London is my home," said Fernwell; "I am attached to London streets—I know every stone in them."

"If you will keep away from me, then."

"Fifty pounds a year will not do."

"It is all that I can afford."

"By heaven, I will have half!" cried Fernwell, with gleaming eyes, and his hands outstretched, and clenched—"I swear it, and I'll have it. I have been held down too long, and known privation too long, to let the chance escape me. You have risen for me as well as for yourself, and I will share the profits, or you share this penury. I will have no more of this hand-to-mouth existence, begging for crusts, living in holes like these, and dressed like this—I *will* have money!"

"Fifty pounds."

"I will have a hundred and fifty pounds a year from you, and that's too little. I sold my soul for money years ago—just as you will, mark me, for you take after me—and I missed the money, and lost my soul as well. Damned hard, wasn't it? The Henwoods were too sharp for me, and I was a fool to trust in human sympathy. I trust now in no one but myself, and you will give me money, or I will drag you to my level!"

He leaned against the wall in his excitement, and breathed

heavily. He was not so strong as he used to be, and was easily overpowered. He reached a shaking hand out for his stimulant again; he could not resist any longer; he must have drink to fight the battle out.

"I shall not give this money," said Zach—"it is a vile extortion."

"Yes—yes, you will. Wait till I get cool again, and can talk to you. Oh! yes, you will give it me."

He took time to recover his breath, shutting his eyes, and gasping somewhat. In due course he was more like the bland, sardonic being, who had first confronted his son.

"If you don't agree to give me that money, I shall call on Mrs. Henwood, and tender the result of my long watch upon you. You are acting over again the father's life, for you are scheming for the daughter's hand, and the old story will surely set her against you."

"She will believe it to be only malice on your part. Your revenge for my defiance of you!"

"I have my proofs, and Mrs. Henwood is a suspicious woman."

Zach thought seriously of the chances for and against him.

"I will give you a hundred a year," he said.

"I will have half," snapped Fernwell. "I am going to open a business of my own in a respectable way, and less than half will not do. A hundred and fifty pounds."

"I have named my sum," said Zach rising, "if you will not agree to it, do your worst."

"One moment more. I will go to Mrs. Henwood, Zach, and tell her how she has been deceived in you for many years, tell her that when she thought you at your best, you were not deserving of her help. I will tell her that old tale of how I meant to rob her wharf, and how you meant to help me!—agreed to help me, in your fear and desperation, if it had not been for Teddy, who went with his lies to Griffin Street, and made you the hero of that little story. Why—she would shut her doors in your face, and hurl you back with horror to the streets. Do you think I do not know the woman whom you serve, or that I could not prove it? I can, and I will!"

Zach had turned deadly pale now—it was a ghastly pallor, very different to his usual looks, and he dropped into chair again, and shivered. He had forgotten in his d

that weapon in the hands of his adversary; and yet that fear had led him to stand apart from his brother, lest a chance word, an unguarded expression, should unmask him. If he had repented at the same instant of that weakness, of that step backward, as it were, into the benighted land from which he had made some feeble efforts to escape, who would believe him—who would forever afterward have one grain of faith in him? He must be dragged to the old level; his father was right—he surrendered!

"I will give you the money. It is more than I can afford—it is keeping me poor, at a time when my only chance is before me. You are not acting wisely, even for yourself."

"My dear Zachary, I can not afford to wait. I may go off in a flash—at any moment—and the present hour with me must be my golden one."

"A hundred and fifty pounds—in what manner will you receive it?"

"Quarterly. Send it by half-notes to the address with which I will presently furnish you. I will write to the office."

"No—to Somerset Terrace, New Kent Road."

"Very good—it is immaterial. And the first quarter's payment was due, I think, last June?"

"I have not the money here."

"But you have been saving already, for you are a careful man, and—there, I do not take after you, Zachary. I will write to Somerset Terrace, next week; meanwhile—something on account."

"I can spare seven pounds, now."

"Thank you—we'll make seven do until we get to town."

"And you meet me no more—you sink away!" said Zach eagerly.

"Into endless night—you may rely upon me."

Zach put seven sovereigns on the table, and Mr. Fernwell nodded. They would be quite safe there, the father thought, but on second considerations, perhaps, it would be expedient to pocket them at once. He rose and walked sedately to the table; the drink had not affected his gait yet, though his eyes betrayed the potency of the fluid that he had already imbibed.

"You may go now," he said; "business is over, and only pleasure remains—you seek your pleasure in women, I in

the bottle. Get rich, my son—but make more sure than I did of the money with the wife, or, by all that is holy, we shall topple over together! And if I can be of assistance at any time, in any peril, command your most obedient servant."

He bowed very low, working his shaggy eyebrows as he bowed. He had won the fight, and yet the conqueror stooped to be vanquished. Zach hastened away, glad to escape from him, and Mr. Fernwell flung up his arms exultingly as the son went down the stairs.

"He will be a mine of wealth to me," he cried; "I see him in the future, an El Dorado! I hope that I shall live to enjoy life with him—I'm only eight-and-forty now—and I ought, if I keep quiet. I'll try, for I haven't been a lucky man hitherto, and ill luck has almost shaken me to pieces. Here, I'll reform at once. I'll not drink all the whisky—I'll go and ask Tuggins to help me drink it."

He picked up his bottle and glass, and went down stairs, full of his nobler and better resolutions.

CHAPTER XIV.

LETTICE AND CHRISTIE.

MARTIN WYNN'S holiday was close upon its termination; the fortnight was nearly at an end, and neither father nor daughter thought of a farther extension of leave.

"If you would only allow your daughter to remain with us a few weeks," said Mrs. Henwood, "it would do Lettice a great deal of good. I really fancy that my daughter is altering already."

"You are very kind," answered Martin, "but Christie would not stay, I am sure."

"I think that she would."

"Ask her," said Martin.

Mrs. Henwood did not ask Christie herself, however, but suggested, with affected carelessness, to Lettice that she might ask Miss Wynn to remain a few weeks with them, if it pleased her. Lettice, attached to her new friend already, put the question to her eagerly, pressing her to stay all the power she possessed.

Christie's firmness had not been over-estimated by Martin; Christie was resolved to return with her father; it was very kind of Mrs. Henwood and Lettice, but she must go back.

"I don't see why," said Lettice petulantly.

"I would not leave my father alone for the world," said Christie, "for I am vain enough to think that he would be very miserable without me. It is not as if he had another daughter to take care of him—or if there was any one who understood him as well as myself."

"What will you do when you marry?"

"I shall see to him—I shall arrange all that!" cried Christie. "Do you think if I marry, that it will be the signal to forget him then?"

"Not exactly, perhaps; but there will be a husband to take the first place. But this is not the theme—and loving him as you do, affords you no excuse for refusing me the little favor that I ask."

"Oh! but it is a great favor," said Christie, "and I can not."

"You are tired of me—every body is tired of me very speedily," was the quick assertion here.

"No, I am not," answered Christie, stealing her arms fondly round her; "I have been very happy with you—knowing you more intimately, I love you better, and am less afraid of you."

"Afraid of me!—were you ever afraid of me, then?"

"Oh! you are a grand young lady, and I am only the daughter of a marqueterie-worker," said Christie, laughing.

"Mamma should hear you say this," said Lettice, a little scornfully; "she likes the world that is a step beneath us to be cowed by our position."

"I scarcely understand the tone in which you speak of your mamma, Lettice," said Christie, after a moment's hesitation; "I have been mustering courage to allude to this before—will you forgive me, even if I scold you?"

This dialogue was occurring in the front drawing-room of the Terrace facing the sea; Lettice had taken Christie home with her after a drive, Mrs. Henwood was lying down in her state bedroom after the fatigues of the morning, Martin Wynn had gone for a long walk—a tramp of some sixteen or eighteen miles, and would not be home till seven in the evening. Zachary Henwood was expected to dinner

only; therefore the two maidens had leisure for a long *tête-à-tête* together. They afforded a striking contrast to each other, seated side by side there. Christie, slight and graceful, with fair hair and glowing face, all life, animation, brightness; Lettice, fair-haired also, very tall, a little angular, and her pale cheeks still impervious to any efforts of the sea-breeze to bring a brighter color to them. There was animation in Lettice's face that afternoon, though, and as the conversation between them was continued, that animation increased rather than diminished.

"Scold me if you will, Christie—I will take my scolding with due humility."

"No, on second thoughts I'll not scold you," was the reply; "it is only your odd way of speaking—cold and sharp as the wind we had yesterday. You love your mamma very dearly, Lettice—why, all girls love their mothers!"

"Christie, it is not that I love her not—but the grave doubt comes to me sometimes as to whether she loves me."

"Oh! hush!—please!" cried Christie; "if she should come in and hear you talking thus!"

"I should not mind," answered Lettice; "I have implied as much more than once."

"You have!" cried Christie aghast.

"You can not comprehend what it is to have a fashionable mamma," said Lettice, very energetically. "Why should I expect to be loved, as your father loves you? Why, my mother scarcely saw me till I was fourteen years of age; I was kept away from her by my nurse, by my governess, by my music-masters, and my dancing-masters. When I became her companion, Christie, I but became a subject to vent her bad tempers and caprices on—latterly a woman, in her opinion, to be sold off without my own consent to him who bids the highest for me."

"There, you are excited. You do not know what you are saying, Lettice. I am only a new friend—don't tell me any more."

Lettice did not heed the caution, but went on.

"In all my life no one to love me," cried Lettice, dashing the tears hastily from her eyes; "that is my misfortune—a miserable and an unlucky woman, with but one hope, which, to fulfill, will make *her* unhappy. In all my life no mother, then; no sister to share my sorrows, and to teach me by

companionship more gentleness; no brother to advise and strengthen me, and take my part—every thing against me!”

Christie had already listened to sundry hints of Lettice's troubles, but she was not prepared for this outburst of grief and confidence. She had not considered that Lettice was an impressionable woman, an impulsive one, till then. Like the rest of the world, she had been deceived a little by the outer calmness or rigidity. She sat astonished now, and puzzled what to say.

“You are deceiving yourself, Lettice,” said Christie, at last; “you are making yourself unhappy. I feel sure of it.”

“I am not a morbid woman. You do not understand me better than the rest; and I—I thought that you would!”

“I think I do, a little,” answered Christie; “but I wonder, now, if you have ever tried to understand your mamma?”

“A child can understand her—read her.”

“I am sure that she loves you very much, then,” said Christie, “or why did she wish me to be your friend, thinking that our companionship would be a novelty, and interest you?”

“Does that prove that she loves me very deeply?” said Lettice, quickly.

“It proves, at least, that your mother did not think so much of position as of yourself when she wished that we should see each other frequently.”

“She wished that?” said Lettice, thoughtfully. “How do you know?”

“My father told me last night. I trust that I have not abused his confidence,” replied Christie, beginning to think that she had been a trifle too precipitate.

“If I had known this, I should have disliked you!”

“Why?”

“I don't know. I detest being experimentalized upon. I suppose my mother wished me all of a sudden to become a woman like yourself—very earnest, very amiable, very pious!”

“Ah! now you taunt me,” said Christie. “I will go home at once, and wait for your better temper's coming round again.”

“No—don't go,” cried Lettice, eagerly. “I beg your pardon—I *am* rude of speech—I don't always consider

what I say. There, perhaps my mother loves me after all. Can I say fairer than that?"

"Freely forgiven, Lettice; but what a stormy nature yours is!"

"I do not often indulge in this fashion," replied Lettice. "I am very proud of my stoicism—the gravity with which I can endure a stab, Christie. I want a kindred spirit to make me happy—one who could sympathize with all my sorrows, all my joys. A woman like yourself, whom I would compel to understand me, and ask her, from her deeper, purer knowledge, to teach me my duty, and turn me from the wrong path I am pursuing."

"The wrong path," repeated Christie.

"I feel it is," said Lettice, sorrowfully, "and still it is beyond my power to turn back. You do not know the dark thoughts I entertain—the wicked and unwomanly wretch I am sometimes; and you will never know, because I don't want to be wholly hated here."

She caught Christie to her breast, and kissed her passionately and feverishly; she almost thrust her away from her the instant afterward, saying,

"Don't speak to me!—don't look at me!"

"You said a little while ago that you had only one hope, the fulfillment of which would render your mother unhappy. I pray you, Lettice, to give up that hope—you will more surely find your happiness elsewhere."

"In heaven, do you mean; I shall never go there!"

"Lettice!—Lettice!—have you gone mad?"

"I can't go there," she said, her face assuming that extra hardness to which we have drawn attention already in these pages, "I have too many bad thoughts. I have conspired against my mother and against myself; I have insulted the dead! There, there, think that I have gone mad," she added; "and now the madness past, think how sober and stately a woman I am!"

She rose, and walked up and down the drawing-room, with head erect, and grave and measured steps; in an instant all emotion had vanished.

"I meant a happiness on earth—" began Christie, when Lettice checked her.

"I ask you to assist me in my sober mood, and not to attempt to upset it again," she said, coldly; "the subject is

dismissed, and you, whose sympathy I have *not*, need not, at least, seek to revive it,"

"You have my sympathy."

"For a fortnight," responded Lettice; "you will not let it grow upon you, and do good to me. You will go away next Saturday."

"I must."

"In another fortnight it will strike my mother that we have been too familiar, and that ours is an acquaintance to be dropped—that there is a difference between the etiquette of a watering-place and the rules governing a London season. So you will keep away?"

"Certainly."

"You will not come to Wimbledon—ever?"

"Not if Mrs. Henwood object. How can I?"

"I ask you."

"Lettice," said Christie, suddenly, "I think that your mother's second suggestion will be wiser than the first. Here, if I have helped to make an hour more pleasant, I am glad; but in town, where you and your many friends are a something so utterly different to me and mine, it would only mortify us both to meet too often."

"Meaning that you are anxious to drop me quietly," said Lettice.

"Meaning that I think it better for us both," said Christie.

"Better for you—I know that."

Lettice took a turn or two across the room again, then stopped before Christie, and placed her hands, strong as a man's almost, upon the shoulders of her new-found friend.

"Shall I tell you a secret—more than one?"

"If you think that my advice, or my father's, is worth any thing in reply."

"Your father's!—oh! I had forgotten. *You* have no secrets from your parent?"

Christie started and turned color.

"I—I hope that I have not. If I have a secret from him, it is, at least, a secret to myself," she said irrelevantly.

"A something that you can not own—a man you love, perhaps, and whom your father does not."

She did not wait for Christie's answer, but went on again—

"I will not tell you any thing," she continued; "it is against my creed to babble of my own regrets. I am a

strong-minded woman—it is the ambition of my life to continue so. I will not trust any body but myself; if I loved a man with my whole heart, I would not wholly trust him.”

“I would.”

“For there is no trusting any one. I would keep back for the future a test of his affection, and try him that way; I would dash a truth in his face, and see if he flinched—I would keep on the watch.”

“If I—”

“I will not dwell on this any more,” said Lettice; “I am rapid, common-place, and *fine* from this moment. Here is mamma to assist me!”

The door opened as she spoke, and Mrs. Henwood entered the room.

“We have been quite energetic this afternoon, mamma,” said Lettice—“talking a great deal of nonsense, though.”

“Backbiting me, as usual, Lettice, I dare say,” said Mrs. Henwood, a little acrimoniously.

“No—speaking the truth concerning you,” was the quick reply—“how kind you have been to allow me Christie for a friend.”

“You are glad of that, then?”

“Very glad.”

“Position, after all—a high wall to separate class from class is not the first thing to be studied,” said Mrs. Henwood; “and if Miss Wynn, when we are in town, will—”

“Miss Wynn and I have settled all that,” interrupted Lettice.

“Oh! very good. Now tell me, both of you, what you think of the set of this *moiré*?”

“Baggy, just a little,” said Lettice, dryly.

“Great heavens!—baggy!” exclaimed the mother—“where?”

Christie was glad to get home that evening—Lettice had excited and confused her. She confessed in her heart to a growing love for Lettice, and she had a strong desire to be of service to her—to know her sorrows, real or imaginary, and put them, if it were possible, in their best light. She saw clearly enough that Lettice was unhappy, and that she helped, in some degree, to that unhappiness. For the first time in life, Christie had had lately a glimpse of a higher sphere, and it had not filled her with any longing to exchange

her own for it. Not for all the world, she thought, would she change places with the heiress, and take her morbid cares, her jealous fretfulness, along with the carriages, jewels, and fine house. As for giving up her father for Mrs. Henwood, the very thought gave her a shivering fit, that lasted till that father came back from his walking tour.

On the Saturday afternoon, father and daughter went back to London. In the morning of that day they exchanged adieux on the sands with Mrs. Henwood, her daughter and Zach Fernwell.

Mrs. Henwood pitched her tent on one favorite spot when the weather was fine; it was like encamping on the desert, and took a considerably longer time. Martin Wynn knew where to find the Henwood party.

"We shall quite miss you, Mr. Wynn," Mrs. Henwood condescended to assert; "you have become a part of the day."

"Or of the day's amusements," was the response.

"You must not be bitterly disappointed in your failure to make me all that is good and unworldly," she said, laughing very merrily. "You have taken a great deal of trouble with very obstinate materials."

"Yes—very obstinate," assented Martin, with a sad look at her. "It would take a year of incessant hammering, with solitary confinement for you—or a nice long illness, with a fine prospect of death at the end of it."

"Oh, you dreadful man!" cried the lady. "There, I shall be glad to hear that you have left Yarmouth now."

She shook her curls at him again, and then Martin held her hand for a moment in his own, wished her good-by, and turned to her daughter. A few words of parting salutation in that quarter.

"Thank you very much for the loan of Christie," said Lettice.

Martin regarded her very attentively; he fancied that he detected a ring of the family satire in her voice.

"You are welcome, Miss Henwood—if you have appreciated the *loan*."

"Am I not all the better for it?" she asked.

"Then thank yourself as well as me," he answered.

He turned to Zach and shook him by the hand also. He fancied that Zach had become white and thin since they had

met last; that the face was sterner in its expression, and the expression not exactly what it should have been.

"Do your best," he said in a lower tone—"we are all watching for you—hoping for you."

"Thank you!" murmured Zach.

"Can I deliver any message to a friend?" Martin said in a lower tone still; "that friend is one who will treasure every word."

"That I think of him still," said Zach with a troubled voice; "that I wish him more happiness than I shall ever obtain."

He turned away, and went off at his utmost speed along the sands. Martin looked after him.

"Humph—queer!" he said to himself; "but that sort of feeling will not do him any harm."

Christie parted with Lettice Henwood last of all. They parted, it was observed, not too warmly—Lettice resented Christie's preference for the father's company. Lettice hoped that they would have a safe journey back to London, and then turned away.

Christie stood her ground against Miss Henwood's capriciousness pretty well, but the tears were in her eyes when she had parted from her and was returning with her father to their lodgings.

Martin Wynn saw them, as he saw every thing, and felt angry that his daughter should have been so curtly dismissed.

"If ever I go out of my way again to oblige a parcel of stuck-up people, I shall be a bigger fool than I have been!"

"Still, we obliged them," said Christie; "and Lettice is a very strange girl. I wish that I had known her earlier, or not have liked her quite so much after I had known her."

"That's not a speech up to the mark either," said Martin. "Let us make haste back to home, Mr. Ubbs and Teddy—three things that never change."

In the carriage—a quiet third-class carriage, as befitted these representatives of the people—father and daughter were startled by Lettice Henwood's sudden appearance before them. The train was nearly off, and the guard was anxious to get the fine young lady away, and shut the door.

"Christie," said Lettice, with both hands extended, "kiss me, and don't think any worse of me for my nonsense this

morning. I am very sorry to part with you—you can't tell how sorry!"

She returned Christie's kiss passionately, then said, "Why didn't you stay!—oh, why didn't you stay a little while longer, till I could trust you! Whatever happen now—your fault."

"That's Henwood gospel—not ours," said Martin.

"I did not ask for your remarks, sir," cried Lettice, rudely. "You take your daughter away when she might have been of help to me."

She moved aside, and allowed the guard to shut the door, standing on the platform in her rich silk dress, beating a lace parasol impatiently against her skirt. As the whistle sounded, she went once more toward the carriage, heedless of the guard's vociferous shout at her.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Wynn—I was rude. Christie—good-by! God bless you!"

The train clanked its way from beneath the terminus and went out into the flat country, leaving Lettice Henwood looking after it, as after some hope that she had let escape her.

BOOK IV.

LOSING CASTE.

CHAPTER I.

FOUND OUT.

THE winter once again upon the London streets, and London street folk. As cold and merciless a winter as that on which our story opened—a four weeks' frost, come the twentieth of January next, a frost that had nipped to the very heart of the people. The people were suffering that keen winter-time, suffering by wholesale. Not all the money sent in by liberal hands to all the refuges that asked for charity in the columns of the daily press; not all the money collected by the parishes for that in-door and out relief, which ever seems so grudgingly bestowed; not all the efforts of liberal men, dispensing their own alms, and making no show, seemed to take one haggard wretch the less from London streets, or save one from dying in them.

A woman being whirled westward in her carriage and pair, a woman who objected to poor people, and knew nothing about them, and did not want to know, seemed suffering from the weather with those less fortunate than she, on that day verging on the twentieth of the new year. This woman might have been at Torquay luxuriating in a middle climate, or at Hastings, Ventnor, her favorite Paris, any where. Business got on well without her, and London was objectionable and intensely cold; there seemed no occasion to be in town for a lady of this class, one whom the frost seemed to affect even in her air-tight carriage, with a foot-warmer at the bottom thereof. She was blue with cold, and she sat with her teeth chattering, heaped in a cushioned corner, her arms buried in her sable muff, and herself weighed down by sables, a picture far from exhilarating. The coach-

man on the box freezing rapidly as he drove, and the rigid footman hanging on behind, all goose-flesh, were cheerful mortals by comparison; but then there was no frost in the system of those two.

The equipage was driven to Griffin Street, Tottenham Court Road, and stopped before the house of Martin Wynn. The footman, glad of a respite from the cold, leaped down and endeavored to restore the circulation of his blood by an extra application to the knocker, alarming the whole of Griffin Street in consequence.

A tall young man with a wiry head of hair responded.

"I wouldn't excite myself any more than I could help, if I were you!" said Teddy. "What is the matter?"

"Is Mr. Wynn in, or—"

"No, he is not. If you have brought a message from Mr. Braddleton—"

"Which I haven't, my good person," said the footman, interrupting in his turn, "if you'll be ke-ind enough to let me speak!"

"Look sharp, then, I'm in a hurry, and wasting time. I never waste time. Here, will you speak to the servant?"

Teddy was about to retire into the room on his right, and leave the footman to the maid-servant, coming up from the lower regions with a vacant expression of countenance, when a hand beat impatiently against the glass of the carriage window, and a face which Teddy recognized looked through at him.

Teddy colored, and felt alarmed. Mrs. Henwood at that house in Griffin Street! What did it mean, he wondered? The footman approached the carriage, and Mrs. Henwood lowered the glass.

"Mr. Wynn is out, ma'am," said the footman.

"No matter."

The door was opened, and the carriage steps were lowered. Mrs. Henwood descended, crossed the pavement toward the house, and was met by the same piece of information on the doorstep.

"Mr. Wynn is out, ma'am."

"I will see his daughter."

"Miss Wynn is out, ma'am."

"I will wait."

Teddy Fernwell made room for his visitor, and was pro-

ceeding to show the way up stairs, when Mrs. Henwood brought him to a halt again.

"I will go in here."

"This is our workshop, Mrs. Henwood," said Teddy.

"It is a front room, and I can see the carriage, and give orders to my coachman if required," she said. "I prefer to rest here."

"Very well."

Teddy was a little confused; he objected to this determination, but not being ready with a method to change it, he led the way into the workshop. Mrs. Henwood steered her way through a room encumbered with a bench by the window, by tools and slips of wood, and half-finished articles of work, to the chair which was fortunately there, and which Teddy had wheeled close to the fire, whereon a glue-pot was simmering.

"You will excuse the litter, Mrs. Henwood," said Teddy, apologetically; "and you really will find the drawing-room more convenient. Its windows look upon the street also."

"I said that I would stop here, young man," she replied, taking her seat, and, despite her former assertion, turning her back completely upon the window. "Go on with your work, and do not mind me."

Teddy mounted his stool, and relapsed into an attentive posture over his veneering. Mrs. Henwood set her muff aside, and crouched forward over the fire, her thin hands spread out, gloved though they were, toward the blaze there. No study of posture, no set ease, no woman trained to the right angle then, but a thoughtful woman bent forward in a witch-like attitude, that was utterly devoid of grace, and staring at Teddy's glue-pot as though it was the caldron whence strange things might issue.

Teddy tried to settle himself to his veneering, but he could not; he was distressed by a myriad of thoughts as to the reason of Mrs. Henwood's presence there; he could but attribute it to danger—danger to Zach, perhaps. She had not come to give Martin an order for another cabinet, to inquire concerning Martin or Christie's health, or she would have never looked like that. Her voice was harsher than its wont, also; Teddy had only heard it once, but he was sure of it!"

"How long will Mr. Wynn be away?"

"It is impossible to say, ma'am," answered Teddy; "half an hour—an hour—perhaps longer. If you will be kind enough to leave word when you will call again, it might be more convenient to you."

"It might," was the response, but Mrs. Henwood made no effort to rise.

"Miss Wynn is out for the day—something about the chapel, I believe."

"I do not wish to see Miss Wynn."

"And—"

"Will you go on with your work, and take no notice of me, please?"

Teddy succumbed to this reproof; he had been anxious to get rid of that figure which embarrassed him; he was almost fearful that by some strange instinct the lady sitting there would find him out. Once the idea seized him that she had come there to unmask him, when looking askance at her over his work five minutes afterward, he noticed that she had changed her position, and that the light brown eyes were fixed intently upon his face.

"I—I beg your pardon," he stammered in his confusion, "you spoke?"

"Not a word."

She continued to look at him, he felt assured; he writhed uneasily on his stool; a cold perspiration broke out upon his forehead; it was all very strange, he thought, for he was not a coward.

Mrs. Henwood spoke to him presently; when he was trying his hardest to forget her, and mustering courage to attempt a whistle in a subdued tone, by way of cheering himself over his marqueterie.

"Take this vile-smelling thing from the fire!" pointing to the glue-pot; "it is abominable."

Teddy left his seat and complied with Mrs. Henwood's request. When he was back in his place, she looked at him again.

"You are the man subject to fits?" she asked, inspecting him through her eye-glass for an instant; "the man who came to Wimbledon?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"You helped to finish the cabinet, I understand?"

Teddy nodded.

"You are a clever man in your trade, no doubt?"

Teddy laughed.

"I earn my living, and a few in the trade like my work. I have Mr. Wynn to thank, for all that."

"Is he a good master—now?"

"The best of masters—as he is the kindest of men, madam!" cried Teddy enthusiastically, as he warmed to his subject; "only those who live with him, who see him every day, can understand how truly good he is."

"Would you like a place—supposing that I could obtain you one—under Mr. Braddleton of Park Lane? To do all that he requires—and carry out all that he commands—for twice the pay you obtain here?"

"I shall never leave here, madam," replied Teddy; "I am a fixture here—working my best for Martin Wynn, until it pleases him to get tired of me."

"You live here?"

"No—over the water."

"What is your name?"

Teddy was nonplused by the inquiry. He had said too much; he had been drawn out, and now he must tell a lie. Well, it was for Zach's sake again; he did not remember ever telling a lie for his own, since he was rescued from Drag's Court.

"Edward Thankful," he said, on the spur of the moment.

"That's a strange name," she replied; "go on with your work. Your master will not be thankful to me for the time of which you have robbed him."

She turned her back completely upon him now; taking pains to screw her chair round for that purpose, and doing it with an angry movement even. She sat glancing at the fire, with a countenance the reverse of every thing amiable—the face of Mrs. Henwood at her worst. Teddy fancied after a while that she must have fallen asleep, she remained so still there, so entirely forgetful of the feelings of her servants, and of her horses blocking up three fourths of the roadway, which was of narrow dimensions in Griffin Street. The coachman and footman were side by side upon the box now, grumbling about their places together, and huddled against each other for warmth, like two of the monkey tribe. Blest if they'd been paid for freezing there hours and hours, and getting their complexions purple! They were

worth their money any where, and Mrs. Henwood would receive due warning when she was back again in Wimbledon. From their icebergs they could envy the baked-potato man at the corner of the street; and in their desperation at last they took it in turns to leave the box and run to the "George," and have something warm with peppermint in it every quarter of an hour, thus rendering it doubtful, if Mrs. Henwood spent much longer time in Griffin Street, whether her coachman would be able to see his way home.

Martin Wynn reached Griffin Street at last, not surprised very much at the carriage before his doors—for there were stately visitors to see Martin's work at times—and having no suspicion of the lady who had favored him with her company, until he had let himself in with his latch-key, and was standing in the workshop looking at her.

"Mrs. Henwood!" he exclaimed—"this is a great honor, stepping from your position to mine like this!"

Mrs. Henwood answered him sharply enough, for she had become tired of waiting there, and was very irritable that morning.

"Have you not forgotten that talk of position yet?" she said; "you bear ill will against my pride, I see."

"I bear ill will against no man or woman," answered Martin; "it was a joke of mine—that's all."

"I am not in a humor for jokes."

"Sorry to hear that," replied Martin—"a joke's a good thing, when it's a fair and true one, and has a good effect on others."

"Yours was a bad joke—an ill-timed one—very."

"Well," with a fillip to his ear, "perhaps it was. I make a blunder occasionally; and," he added, in a different tone, "if you are in trouble, I am very sorry to fling a jest at you."

"I am in trouble, Martin Wynn. I have come to ask your advice."

"Mine?"

"Ah! it is very odd," she said, more to herself than Martin, and exhibiting, as she spoke, a touch of that old conceit, against which Martin had good-humoredly winged a shaft, "that out of all my friends, my grand connections, my legal, medical, business, and confidential advisers, I should come to you."

"It *is* odd," he assented; "will you step up stairs, please?"

Mrs. Henwood followed Martin Wynn to the room on the first floor, sat down face to face with him before the fire that had been kept up there awaiting his return. Martin Wynn looked closely at the face of the patroness—yes, it was not the face that he had noticed at Yarmouth, or at Wimbledon—it was, so to speak, a *tired* face, shorn of the affectation which had become almost natural to its expression, and for the first time in his experience quite destitute of *color*.

"In trouble?" said Martin Wynn, echoing her past words, when they were seated thus—"I am sorry to hear it."

"You are not surprised, then?"

"Trouble comes to great houses as to small ones," said Martin—"sometimes the greatest of trouble to the largest house. It is fair. You do not expect in this life all your own way?"

"Nor in the other."

"In the other—"

"Oh! I have not come here to talk about another world—that's a more favorite topic with you than me, I'm sure. I haven't waited all these hours for that, and been nearly poisoned, also, with the smell of glue. What do you want away from home?" she cried, peevishly.

"Business took me away," said Martin; "Stanley and Burns can not always get on without me, and I never turn my back on a fair stroke of work. But—in trouble," he added, recurring to the one theme on which it seemed necessary to dwell—"well, what can *I* do to alleviate it?"

"Nothing."

"But you come—" began Martin, when she concluded, with a vehemence and a fierceness that were new in her,

"—To reproach you."

"Indeed!" was the surprised reply.

"To reproach you for advising me nine years ago, nearly, to adopt my sister's child, and save him from the moral ruin which seemed threatening him—you, man, advising me to my own disgrace!"

"No, no—I hope not. Not so bad as that—speak more coolly, Mrs. Henwood, and then I shall understand you better. What has happened?"

"That wretch whom I have fostered—whom you thrust upon me against the instinct that should have taught me better than your words—that child with the bad blood in him, that *must* make him bad, has set my daughter against me, won from her the little affection that she ever had, taught her to look to him before me, the world, and every thing! I have found them out!"

"Surely they do not love each other?" exclaimed Martin.

"They think they do," said Mrs. Henwood; "he has studied the eccentricities of Lettice, mastered her nature, made her almost his slave. That girl would be proud to be his victim, and become that man's wife. This is the old story of nursing the viper till it stings one."

"How long has this been going on?"

"Ask them that. I can not tell you."

"Neither Zach to confess to you his passion—nor your daughter," said Martin, sadly; "yes, this is a great trouble."

"And a great disgrace."

"Your own nephew!" commented Martin.

"The son of a vagabond, a thief, a convict."

"That's looking at the worst of every thing," said Martin, in a more cheerful tone.

"Why don't you tell me what to do?" she cried, in fretful tones; "and not try to console me. I haven't come all this way for consolation—there is not any."

"In the first place, Mrs. Henwood, what does your daughter say?"

"That she is engaged to Zachary Fernwell, is old enough to know her own mind, and to see where her happiness lies, and all that ridiculous rhodomontade.—that having given her word to love him, she will keep firm against every wish of mine. Oh!" with a sorrowful wail, that touched Martin, "to live to see my own daughter turn against me thus!"

"Patience! And this Zach?"

"Talks like a book—like fifty books—about his attachment too. I told him last night that I would ruin him—that I would cast him back to the dregs of that society from which I rescued him—and then he—he—he almost defied me, telling me that it was beyond my power, and wishing to reason with me about his influence at the wharf, as if I could hear reason after that! I will never forgive them

both—if I could have found a Bible any where about the house, I would have sworn it to their two false faces.”

“I would not talk like this, madam,” reprovèd Martin; “no good can arise from it—all this kind of talk is nonsense.”

“Is it? We shall see!”

“I don’t know exactly what is to be done,” said Martin, with his characteristic fillip to his ear again; “in your place, I would make the best of it.”

“Letting this viper marry my child?”

“Not if I could help it,” answered Martin.

“There—I am glad I have come—you side with me in this—you see the unsuitableness, the wickedness of the match?”

“I see, Mrs. Henwood, a young man acting a deceitful part against you—scheming against your hopes, that should have been very sacred to him—I see but little honor in him, and much ingratitude. Such a man will not make your daughter a good husband.”

“And I had found an excellent match for her—oh! dear!”

“Not forced it upon her, or driven her by your persistence the wrong way?”

“She has not even that excuse.”

“You want my advice?” asked Wynn.

“You are a thoughtful man. I think that you are a good one. But I don’t know,” she said, despairingly, “the little confidence I had seems wearing out.”

“I would, in your place, reason with Lettice—appeal to her love and duty—ask her to wait patiently even, and not precipitately rush on to her own unhappiness. I would speak to her like—a mother!”

“I have been the most indulgent of mothers all my life.”

Martin doubted this, but did not contradict her.

“It is all your fault, too, Mr. Wynn,” she whimpered; “you preached me into taking him—you thought it would be for the best.”

“It should have been, had he been less devoid of principle; had he—who was his tutor?”

“Mr. Clevelly—a man from Oxford, with fifty references from the nobility.”

“A religious man?”

“I don’t know—what is that to do with it?”

"A great deal," said Martin. "Zach has sunk suddenly and deeply for want of a good foundation. A Christian man is as strong as the faith that gives strength to him."

"You would have brought him up differently?" asked Mrs. Henwood.

"Very differently. In a more humble fashion—with less book learning, and less care for the world."

"He would have deceived you, when it suited his purpose—when it would have advanced him one step."

"Not he."

"Look to your own protégé," cried Mrs. Henwood, flying off into fresh excitement again, and springing to her feet to give more power to her warning; "look to my viper's brother, whom *you* have adopted—he has the same bad blood in him, and will turn against you as surely as the world stands! I see it in his face—and I see in the future that you will live to rue the day you ever tried to save him from the streets. All bad, these Fernwells—every one as full of evil as it is possible. Martin Wynn, your time will come, as I'm a living woman."

"No, no," said Martin, hastily; "he of whom you speak would lay down his life for me before he would deceive me."

"Look to him—look to him," she repeated twice, "you will be glad to eat your words some day., Why, you, man, have a daughter too, and yet you trust a son of the devil who first disgraced us."

"Yes—I trust him. I wish you knew him, Mrs. Henwood."

"I hope I may die whenever I seek another Fernwell out!" she cried. "Great heaven! would you thrust this man upon me too?"

"No," answered Martin, "I keep this man, and I pledge my faith in him. But may I ask how you became possessed of the knowledge of his name?"

"You showed me a secret drawer in my own cabinet—and that was the clew to the secret drawer in yours."

"Confound my stupidity!" exclaimed Martin; "why, of course it was, and you discovered the names of the workers—all the names that good Mr. Braddleton would have kept in the dark. Well, that junior workman—that Teddy Fern—"

"I will not hear about him!" interposed Mrs. Henwood,

hurrying to the door, "I will not listen to a word in his favor—I hate him—I hate you for mentioning him! Let me go away from this place—what good advice could I have expected to find here?" she added ungratefully.

"I wish I could advise you farther," replied Martin; "I will think seriously of all this, and let you know."

"Don't take the trouble, please. Very kind of you, Mr. Wynn, but scarcely worth the walk to Wimbledon. I have made up my mind."

"And—"

"And that is all I can tell you," she replied. "I would act like a mother if I had a daughter who loved me—a daughter worthy of the name, which I haven't—which I never, never, never shall have now."

The proud, hard, willful, narrow-minded woman broke down utterly at last, and leaned against the door to which she had walked, sobbing very bitterly. Martin offered her his arm with a gentleness and courtesy that she remembered afterward—not then.

"Let me lead you to your carriage, Mrs. Henwood," he said; "you will be better at home, thinking quietly and *seriously* of all this. Indeed, I am very sorry."

She took his arm mechanically, and they went out of the room and down the stairs together, the woman very feeble, the man careful of her every step.

In the passage Teddy appeared for an instant, and went back into the room in haste, as her eyes flashed at him, and he was waved—almost imperiously—from her path.

Out of the narrow hall into the street, Martin opening the carriage door, and assisting her into her seat, and over the foot-warmer—cold as a stone now.

"Indeed, I am very sorry," he said again before he left her; but she did not respond—even turned her head away from him.

The footman was at the door in his place as if by magic.

"Where to, ma'am?"

"Home—as fast as you can!"

The carriage and horses that had stopped the way in Griffin Street moved on at last, leaving Martin Wynn, bare-headed at the door, looking sorrowfully after them.

CHAPTER II.

TEDDY'S CONFESSION.

TEDDY FERNWELL was working with extra energy to make up for lost time when Martin came back to the workshop. Teddy glanced up, exchanged a smile with the true friend, and then applied himself to his work again. Teddy was anxious to know the reason for Mrs. Henwood's visit there, and whether her coming affected his brother Zach, but he would not betray his curiosity. His master might have been sworn to secrecy, or might think it best not to disturb the pupil set ever apart from the brother. But Teddy was very anxious about Zach—fearful that Zach had imperiled, in some way, and despite all his care, that position to which he had attained.

Martin Wynn went close to the bench, and looked on at Teddy's work—a piece of marqueterie for a table-top; and then looked at Teddy, and thought of Mrs. Henwood's prophecy, which was troubling him, despite his common sense.

"He has the same bad blood in him, and will turn against you as sure as the world stands!"

She uttered her foreboding with due emphasis—like a woman inspired. If he had been a nervous man, it might have made him suspicious of this elder brother, she had spoken with such firm conviction of the truth of her prophecy. But to look at his pupil was to erase by degrees the impression that Mrs. Henwood had left behind her; Martin could not look at that man's face, frank, earnest, and intelligent as it was, and not believe in Teddy's regeneration. In all Teddy's acts of life a disinterestedness, an anxiety to show his gratitude, which there was no capability of feigning. If he had had a doubt of him—which he had not—Martin Wynn would have lost it watching Teddy at his work.

"Teddy," he said, "I am giving up all my old conceit. You beat me with my own weapons."

"No, sir," replied Teddy, laughing, "not half so bad as that."

"So bad, eh?" said Martin; "that's a queer remark. But you have not been working with your usual expedition, and at least I have a good excuse for scolding."

"She put me out," replied Teddy. "I could not work comfortably with Mrs. Henwood staring at me, and asking all kinds of questions."

"Why did you not show her up stairs?"

"Bless you, sir, she wouldn't go!"

"What questions were they, Teddy?"

"Whether I would like a place under Mr. Braddleton's inspection—double the pay, and so on. As if I would leave Griffin Street to find my fortune round the corner, sir!"

"Why not?" asked Martin.

"You needn't ask me that," replied Teddy; "you know why I shall always stay here, helping you—until I can not be of help any longer. I don't think," with a vehement shake to his head, "that *that* needs any explanation!"

"Well—I don't think it requires any, Teddy."

He let his hand fall upon the shoulder of his pupil and remain there. Something in the words, something in the action, disturbed Teddy's application to his work; he looked up very quickly.

"Bad news?" he interrogated.

"Yes—bad news!"

"Zach! I know it's about Zach, sir!"

"Yes—about Zach!" he assented again.

Teddy pushed his work completely aside, and turned round on his high stool till he was face to face with his employer. Teddy was flushed and excited; his wiry black hair seemed bristling up with greater energy, and his eyes were dilating with the fear of a coming revelation.

"Go on, please—go on," he said, with eagerness.

"It's not very long ago, Teddy," Martin began, "since I told you that you would live to be ashamed of your brother—if I have brought you up well, which I think I have—you will blush for him this day."

"Oh! sir, he—he—hasn't taken any thing?"

"Yes—he has."

"My God!—to think that he should! To think that after all these years he could not keep honest!"

"He has taken advantage of Mrs. Henwood's confidence," explained Martin; "he has taken advantage of his place in that house to make love to Mrs. Henwood's daughter—to win her affections to himself, and set her, as by a natural result, against the mother. He has been a coward, a spy, and a knave!"

"But he hasn't taken any money, then?"

"I consider that he has done worse than that—he has certainly done much more to set Mrs. Henwood against him, and prove the craftiness and meanness of his nature. Why, there can not be any good in this man!"

Teddy clasped his hands and wrung them tightly together. From the height of his stool he looked down at the floor, grieved and discomfited.

"You can not see any good in him after this, Teddy?" said Martin.

"I don't know. He might have loved the girl very much," stammered Teddy.

"He should have told Mrs. Henwood so—he should at least have put upon her guard the woman who had done so much for him! A man with a spark of honor in him would not have hesitated."

"Why should he pain her?" said Teddy, taking up his brother's defense more warmly. "He might have known how hopeless it all was, and fancied that the better plan was to keep his love hidden, preying only on himself. He might have seen that it was impossible to marry her, and have tried very hard to have lived without her, doing his duty just as well to the one he served. I think so, at all events," he added.

"Ah! it might have been very easy to deceive himself after this fashion, I dare say," answered Martin; "but he would have been none the less a coward, playing a false part to her who raised him in the world. And, Teddy, he did not keep his passion to himself, but overpowered a foolish girl with it; there he was the knave!"

"He was wrong there," said Teddy, slowly, still looking at the floor.

"I say," cried Martin, with some force, "that he was altogether wrong—that from the beginning to the end I can not see an excuse for him. I am very sorry now that any words of mine should have helped to place him in a higher

sphere than he deserved; better for him if you had not come to defend him on that night I saw you first!"

Teddy cowered more at this. He had done evil on that day that good might come of it; and evil had arisen, as was natural. The sin of that day was unconfessed—must ever remain so, for Zach's sake and his own—and that unselfish sin ever weighed upon him, holding him down.

"Don't say better for him," urged Teddy, mournfully; "he was weak, sir, and might have gone back to the streets, with never a spark of good to keep a soul in him. I will ask you, sir, not to say better for him, if I had not come, when he might have fallen, oh! so much lower!"

"Teddy, I don't see how much lower he could have fallen. He might have been a thief—he is a thief now."

"You—you are hard upon him."

"And he might have been still in Upper Ground Street, or here by your side, working with you, as honest and unselfish as yourself."

"He would have found better teaching here than in the big house," replied Teddy. "I think, if he had staid *here*, perhaps—but oh! I can't say—I don't know."

He leaped off the stool, and began to pace up and down the room, his hands clasping and unclasping, his breath coming short and quick. Martin regarded him with surprise.

"Why should you feel this so acutely, Teddy?" he asked, when his pupil's perambulations appeared to increase rather than diminish.

"I will tell you, Mr. Wynn. Give me time to find my breath."

Martin was amazed, but he waited patiently, keeping his watch upon Teddy, who seemed long in discovering that article he sought, and to be taking eccentric methods to facilitate the discovery. Martin would not intrude again by any remark; he took up the thin slip of veneer on the bench, and affected to inspect the work; he waited very anxiously now for Teddy Fernwell's next words. From the background, vague and misty, was there advancing any thing to scare *him* in his turn? He almost feared so; he was sure so when Teddy suddenly snatched the work from his hand, cast it on the floor, and set his foot upon it.

"Don't look at it, sir—don't touch it—it is the work of a COWARD!"

At the last word Martin Wynn understood all; the whole truth flashed upon him before another syllable had escaped the lips of the excited man confronting him.

"I hope not," he answered.

"Yes, sir—a coward. Acting as Zach has acted, following his steps, as by some evil rule which governed both of us, I see now the coward that I have been. I was afraid to tell you—I thought that I could live and die, and keep my secret till to-day, but it wasn't fair. I see it now!"

He walked to a corner of the room, struggled into his great-coat, and seized his hat.

"Where are you going?" asked Martin.

"I am going home—I am going away."

"For good?"

"Yes, sir—for good. For the good of you and—*her!*"

"Not just yet. Stay a minute or two, and let us understand each other better. This is a matter not to be dashed at in a hurry."

"Mr. Wynn, I would rather go now. I have explained—the rest you can understand."

"May I ask you, as a favor to me, to sit down?"

He pointed to the chair which Mrs. Henwood had vacated. Hat in hand, Teddy dropped into it at his request; Martin took a seat near him—both men were very pale now.

"To think that you, of all men whom I trusted, could not have told me this before!" Martin said, reproachfully.

"I was afraid."

"Ah! then, you *were* a coward!" said Martin—"and it had been my pride to think that I had made you, with God's help, so brave and good a man!"

"Brave to fight the world, sir, I hope, but not to fight against my love for Christie."

"Hush, hush!—if she heard you!—if she should have come home!—if she only knew! Teddy," he said, suddenly, and with a fierceness that he had not exhibited hitherto, "don't tell me that she knows!"

"Not so bad as that, sir. I would have rather died—I would have rather gone back to Drag's Court, and begun the old life from the fever-time—than let her know it."

"That's well," said Martin, with a sigh of relief.

"I have tried very hard to keep all this to myself—I

knew how far away she was from me—I would not so disgrace her as to make her my wife, if she, and you, and all the world could have been so foolish as to ask me; and I thought it right, in my weak judgment of what *is* right, to keep it to myself to this day. But I could not help loving Christie, for she helped to save me; she was ever like a sister, and I could not know her and not love her, sir. Very much to blame, but I could not help myself—and more to blame in not telling you this earlier; but then I was afraid of your unhappiness!”

“Honestly said, at least,” murmured Martin.

“No, sir, I am not honest,” said Teddy, catching quickly at the words; “there you misjudge me. I am false!”

Martin thought that he alluded to the same subject which had distressed them both, but Teddy was thinking of all that had placed him there, and of the lie that he had told for Zach. For Zach’s sake, and Zach’s chance, he held his peace still; he would not have shrunk back for himself, even though it cast him farther away from Martin Wynn—forever away from him. Better, perhaps, if he had confessed all in that hour of contrition—better for the future stealing up toward him.

“Honestly said,” repeated Martin; “what are your next intentions?”

“I will go back to Upper Ground Street.”

“You will do nothing desperate—you are not a rash man.”

“I hope not.”

“What do you really think of doing, then?” said Martin.

“I will find another berth, and keep ever away from this place, thinking of you and her, sir, first of all—always! I will take care of the old man, and his daughter, if they’ll let me, after I have told them what a coward I have been.”

“Tell them nothing, if you please,” said Martin; “it would not be fair for me to let this foolish story go farther—not just to Christie.”

“I will be silent, then, sir.”

“Very good.”

“I will go to Stanley and Burns’s at once—I may get on there, and they may never know at Upper Ground Street that I’ve left you.”

“Just as you please.”

Martin looked away full of thought still. He was perplexed; he did not see his way; for once his clear-sightedness was at fault. He did not ask Teddy to remain any longer, and the old servant—the old and faithful servant that Martin had considered him—got up and went rapidly out of the room, murmuring,

“Good-by, sir.”

Martin did not answer; he did not know that Teddy had gone till he heard the street door close behind him,

CHAPTER III. 4

TEDDY'S MISSION.

TEDDY returned home to Upper Ground Street at the usual time, to a casual observer almost in his usual spirits. What he had been doing in the interim no one never knew but Teddy; what grief, remorse, passionate abandonment, or desperate and stubborn fight with himself, was never told to the world, and can only be guessed at in these pages. His had been a life of repression—of keeping something back!—and to casual observers, be it repeated again, he came home that night *almost* in his usual spirits. But to observers who were not casual, there was a difference in him; and Polly Wynn and her father—coming of a sharp, observant family—saw the difference, and began to hazard a few remarks concerning it.

“All right in Griffin Street, I hope?” remarked the watchman.

“Every thing right there, of course,” said Teddy, caressing Speck, now as aged and time-worn as his master, and about as fit for service.

“That’s comfortable hearing. I fancied that you looked a trifle down—that’s why I asked.”

Teddy took up the poker, and began to hammer away at the coals.

“Bless the lad, don’t waste the coals like that!” said the more prudent Polly; “how you are battering away, to be sure!”

“All right,” said Teddy; “I thought a flare would cheer us, and warm us. How cold it is to-night, Miss Polly!”

"Father thinks that the frost is breaking up this evening."

"It's on the move at last," said the old man, "and glad enough we are of it, Speck and I. It changed at half past four. It has cut hard enough lately—in the night, and just before the dawn on the wharf especially."

"Ah! enough to cut you in half, I know," commented Teddy, "and why you stand against it, I don't see any more than Mr. Martin."

"I can't be beholden to Martin for *my* living," observed Mr. Wynn.

"I'd ask for my pension."

"It would break my heart if they offered it me while I was of any use. And, lor! bless you, Teddy, I'm as much use there as ever I was. What are you thinking about now?"

"Who—I?" said Teddy with a start; "oh! about the comfort this thaw will be to those who can't afford to buy coals. Pooh! it is warm to-night," and he pushed his chair away from the fire into the shadow of the room.

The old watchman noticed the movement, but said nothing till he was ready to depart. Then he came up to Teddy, and stared into his face.

"You are quite sure that there's nothing wrong in Griffin Street, and you're trying to keep it away from me?"

"Nothing wrong there, sir—why, I would tell you in a moment."

"And nothing wrong with you?"

"With me!—ha! ha!—that's a good joke!"

"Because, if there was, I wouldn't mind you coming to my wharf to talk it over. I wouldn't mind giving you the best advice in my power—because you've been a good young fellow, trying to do good where you could."

"Oh! that's all nonsense. We shall want better spectacles than yours, sir, to see the good in me!"

"They don't say that in this house—not from the top floor to the bottom—they don't say it in Upper Ground Street—any wheres."

"They don't know what they're saying," laughed Teddy.

"Good-night, sir."

"Good-night."

Mr. Wynn, senior, was scarcely out of the house, before

Polly, as anxious as her father, dropped to a seat by his side.

"You've done it very well, Teddy, but we see through it here. What is it?"

"Nothing!" was the moody answer.

"Nothing of any consequence, I know," was the cheerful reply; "but a something that seems to you black enough, until we think it over, and rake out all the nonsense in it. Won't you tell *me*?" and Polly's round little eyes were full of astonishment at the mere idea of Teddy's reticence.

"It's a something that I can't tell you now," answered Teddy, thus appealed to, "which I wish that I could—for if any one could brighten up a fellow, why, it's you!"

"Why won't you tell me?"

"I promised not."

"Nothing *against* you? Oh! I'm as sure of that as—"

"I've been afraid of the truth—and I've been weak and foolish," said Teddy, quickly. "Don't ask for any better explanation from me, or Martin, or any one, than that. It will all come round in time—every thing fair and square enough—I pray for that."

"You and Martin have had a quarrel?"

"It takes two to make a quarrel. We shall not quarrel, he and I. I would as soon quarrel with you, or the Bible!"

"Then I won't worry you, if it's a promise," she said; "but it's right enough in the end—right and bright enough, and round it will come, just as you say. All these things come round beautifully, if we have the patience to wait."

"Surely," answered Teddy, "and I'll grow patient like you. With you for my example, I've nothing to fear!" he said, more stoutly.

"I should think not!"

Teddy stood up, and straightened himself. A stalwart man enough, who could hold his ground, he seemed, and Polly thought so, at that time.

"I am likely to be back late to-night," he said. "I shall take the key, and not disturb you."

"I sit up late, Teddy," said Polly; "but there's the key, if you wish it."

"Thank you."

Teddy departed. He went swiftly out of Upper Ground Street toward the Waterloo Road, proceeding from Water-

loo Road to London Road, and the "Elephant and Castle." He was always a fast walker, but his pace that night attracted the attention of foot-passengers, who looked after him, and who inquired, a few of them against whom he came in contact, "where he was running to?"

There was no hesitation in his thoughts, which were made up, evidently. It was a motive as resolute as his progress that took him to Zach's lodgings in the New Kent Road—to the address which he had obtained in some way, being resolved, for good or evil, not to wholly lose sight of his younger and weaker brother.

A pretty girl, with a painful waist, opened the door, and waited for him to state his business.

"Is Mr. Fernwell within?—Mr. Henwood, I should say?" he corrected.

"No, he isn't. Mr. Henwood seldom gets back on week-days so early as this. Will you leave your name, or a message?"

"I will call again."

He went away, returning in an hour's time to receive the same news of Mr. Henwood's absence. At the expiration of another hour he called again.

"Mr. Henwood's at home, but very busy. Will you mention your business to me?"

"To you? Certainly not!"

"Mr. Henwood would not be very much alarmed at your confidence," Miss Evvers said with a toss of her head. "You must send up your name, then."

"Teddy."

Arabella looked hard at the speaker, but departed up stairs with the message, to return in a few minutes with the information that Mr. Henwood would see him.

"The front room, I suppose?" said Teddy.

"I'll show you."

"Oh! I needn't trouble you."

"It's no trouble to me," said Arabella, which indeed it was not. She was glad of all excuses to open that drawing-room door when Zachary Fernwell was at home. She had based many hopes on Zachary, as she had on other junior lodgers in her day, young as she was, but never so earnestly, and with so much heart in her hopes.

Teddy was ushered into the sitting-room, where his

brother awaited him—his brother, pale, and anxious-looking, with his soul—that is, his business soul—in his face.

"Mr. Teddee!" said Miss Evvers.

Zach bowed his head gravely and formally, until the girl had quitted the room; then he turned to Teddy, standing there, and wistfully regarding him.

"What is the matter? What can bring you here?"

"Very bad news of you—or very good news of me, that *you* would be glad even to hear—would bring me always here, despite any wishes to the contrary."

"Sit down," said Zachary; "I suppose the bad news is the motive force on this occasion?"

"The bad news—yes."

"Bad news that you have heard of me, Teddy?" he asked, scornfully.

"Bad news for the two of us."

"Indeed!"

Teddy took the seat that his brother had indicated; the chilliness of his reception did not daunt him much. This new brother he was beginning to understand, and he intruded on that brother's world, knowing what his reception would be beforehand. All this he might expect, and for all he was prepared.

"Ill and worn again, Zach! I think you work too hard," he said.

"We must all work hard, if we wish to live—and keep our place."

"And yours is in danger?"

"Ha!—who told you that?"

"It is no secret. Mrs. Henwood is aware of the whole truth."

"And Mrs. Henwood has been to Martin Wynn's. Well, that is news worth bringing to me—that puts me on my guard."

"I did not come with that object," said Teddy, quickly, "although I am here to be of help to you if I can, and if my way suits you."

"Your way, Teddy?" answered Zach, with more brotherly warmth.

It may have been noted that after a while this strange, selfish young man, always thawed a little beneath Teddy's more genial nature, and the rule held good on this occasion.

"I will explain."

Teddy drew his chair close to the fire, over which Zach had been brooding when his brother was announced.

"Zach," he said, "I know all about this—this love affair."

"I suppose so."

"That you could not keep your love to yourself, but that it betrayed you, and set Mrs. Henwood against you. I will not say any thing about the wrong of it—I have not heard the whole story, and it does not matter to my purpose—but fearing for you, I come to offer my help."

"I must help myself. By my own actions, Teddy, I must stand or fall."

"You will fall, I think," observed the brother.

"I do not think so," answered Zach, more warmly—"I am not a tool. I am not a servant to be dismissed at a moment's warning—I have power in my hands, and I can use it. Fall—no, I will *not* fall!"

"I am glad to hear that."

Teddy's manner changed. His congratulations were scarcely sincere, or his sorrowful face belied his words. Zach was somewhat curious.

"How would you have helped me?" he asked.

"Just listen. I have left Martin Wynn."

"You?—why, there is nothing wrong in you, I hope?" Zach exclaimed. And he did hope that, for an inexplicable reason, or a reason that jarred with his selfish thoughts, and that he could not explain.

"I have not acted as I ought to have done," Teddy answered, gloomily, "and I have withdrawn from the truest friend I ever met—not in anger, but, at least, in sorrow. Now, Zach, I have a good trade at my finger-ends, and I have managed to save two hundred pounds."

"Well?" asked Zach, almost nervously.

"I have been trying very hard to save; when I understood my work the money came in pretty well for a single man with no ambitions, and it has always struck me that there would come a time when I could assist you. If that woman casts you off—and I think she will, I say again—then let you and me begin life together, working for each other. We are not perfect beings, but by our past experience we may show our doubters that we were not so bad and black as they believed. Zach, my one ambition is to take care of you!"

Through the crust of selfishness that had grown and hardened round Zachary in his latter days, pierced the earnest words of the brother. Zach was touched—more, he was deeply moved.

"No, no!" he cried, with horror in his looks—"if I fell never so deeply, I could not come to you for help, after all that has passed, and after all that I have done to show you what an unnatural fellow I am. Not such a thief as that, Teddy—let me fall alone, to the very bottom of the abyss, before I ask you to support me!"

"We are children of one mother. Cast adrift, Zach—who is to help you?"

"My wits," answered Zach—"they will carry me through the world, or I vastly overrate them. *This is no time for sorrowing; I have made the grand plunge, and shall sink or swim in this Henwood venture. I am light of heart, Teddy—I am not in trouble, though I thank you for coming all the same."

"But—Mrs. Henwood's daughter?"

"Will stand by me—she is a true woman. And the mother will not let her child go away and leave her alone in the world—will not care after this to make an enemy of me."

"An enemy—*you* can never be that woman's enemy!"

"If she seek to balk me at every step, to keep me down, to cast in darkness that path of mine which would be bright without her—why not?"

"She saved you."

"I think sometimes that she condemned me!"

"Zach! Zach!" entreated Teddy, "if you would think of a lower station of life—of not robbing this woman of her daughter, and proving to the world how ungratefully you have acted—if you would but think of what you and I could do together abroad!"

"It is all fair sailing here," said Zach; "would you have me tempt the goddess Fortune by going elsewhere in search of her, when she is smiling at my side? Very kind, very praiseworthy and generous of you, Teddy, but I am safe! Six months ago I might have doubted my security—not now."

"What do you intend to do?"

"Make my fortune—it is an easy task."

"You will marry this girl?"

"We shall see," answered Zach, evasively; "I am not to be hoodwinked by her selfish mother. I hate selfishness?"

"Then I can not help you? I can not do any thing for you?"

"No."

"No advice of mine is of any good?"

"Advice comes too late in life for me—I have always mistrusted my advisers—I depend upon my own exertions to reach the end I see before me."

Teddy rose with a half-suppressed sigh.

"I will go away," he said, "if I can do no good. Of course," he added, half apologetically, "under other circumstances, I would not have intruded here."

"Thank you—thank you for coming, Teddy," said Zach, rising with his brother; "I was an unworthy subject for you to consider. I did not believe that there was one friend on whom I could rely like this—a friend in the shade. Some day," he added more quickly, "I may ask you to help me—then I will come to you. Good-by."

He extended both his hands in the impulse—the good impulse—of that hour; and Teddy took them in his own for an instant, and then passed out of the room, for the second time that day a baffled man. His fair dream of going abroad with Zach—and Zach's company in a new world making amends for all the friends in the old—had been quickly dissipated, and it seemed like one more sorrow that had come to him as he walked slowly back to Upper Ground Street.

Meanwhile, Zach had drawn himself very close to the fire again to wonder at all this—to let his wonderment take the place of the many schemes of which his head was full. An old head on young shoulders—very old and worldly—but disturbed that night by the presence of his brother. He could not shake that brother off; he tried at last, but he would intrude upon him, and give that thoughtful, sorrowful expression to his face. He was still trying, when the landlady's daughter came into the room with the supper-tray.

"Take it away!" he cried hastily, "I can't eat. I shall never be able to eat again, I think."

"You ain't happy—oh! you ain't, I know!" cried the impulsive Arabella.

"Who is, in this confounded disagreeable hemisphere,"

cried Zach, with that affected lightness which did not become him very well, because it was foreign to his character; "why, you *ain't* happy either, Bella?"

"Why should I be," was the sullen answer; "who cares whether I am or not?"

"Who cares?"

"It isn't mother—it isn't you."

"I wish that I had the time to defend myself," said he, "but I am busy to-night, and have half a hundred letters to write when you take that cursed supper-tray down stairs."

His airiness of demeanor vanished suddenly, and he spoke like his father for an instant.

"You've got to write to Miss Henwood among the rest, no doubt!" cried Arabella—"you know you have."

"Halloo!" said Zach; "you have been listening?"

"It's time I did listen, if I want to take care of myself," said the girl indignantly. "I'm not a fool, or to be made a fool by you any longer. It's been a capital bit of fun for you to make love to me after business, and when your fine ladies haven't been near to see your goings-on. But I didn't want to come after you—I didn't—didn't care about you a bit!"

The girl—she was not seventeen yet—left the supper-tray on the table, and flounced herself into a chair to cry, and hold her hands before her face, and sob very passionately and piteously. Zach went to her, and tried to calm her.

"Bella, Bella," he said, "this is all very foolish. You have taken my silly speeches in earnest, and it was only a flirtation, after all, between us, with no harm on either side—with nothing for you or me to reproach ourselves."

"You—you—tried your hardest to make me fon-fon-fond of you! You know you did," she cried. "If you'd only have asked me to die for you—"

"Which I wouldn't have done for the world," said Zach; "better that you should live to be a blessing to some good soul in the neighborhood. There's that dentist!"

"I hate dentists!" sobbed Bella.

"Yes—so do I," asserted Zach. "Horrible wretches, always putting cold steel against sensitive teeth! There, Bella, don't cry any more, there's a good girl!"

"You are going to marry that Miss Henwood, then?"

"I don't know. I'm going to try—it's my ill luck, perhaps, but I can't help it now. It's a question of money, Bella, and I'm the most mercenary wretch that ever lived."

"Not—not for love, then? Oh! dear!"

There was consolation in this, Bella thought—a dreary, dismal consolation, doubtless, but it helped to dry her eyes.

"I don't love her one half as well as I love you, upon my soul! It was an early engagement, when we were children almost, and I did not know my own mind—but my word is my bond, you see. There, wipe your eyes, and go down stairs to your mother."

He kissed her again, and she cried again at his caress, but did not cast him off. There *was* some consolation in thinking that his word went one way, and his inclination another—and did he not imply whither his inclination would have strayed had he been free? This was real romance, or tragedy, at least; she had seen something very like it at the Surrey playhouse once, where it had all ended in blue fire and murder. Still there were the proprieties to maintain now, and the heroine to sustain. She got away from Zach's encircling arm, and looked daggers at him—mild daggers, of pasteboard material, and with no points.

"You've tried to trifle with me," said she, seizing the supper-tray in her hands, "and that's all over now between us. You should have known your own mind before you asked her, and not have cared so much for the money. You might have expected to see, some—one—else you liked better as you grew older. You'd better give her up than break her heart!"

"Too late!" said Zach.

"If she could have heard you to-night—and known how deceitful you were, poor girl!" whimpered Bella, as she went out of the room.

If she could have heard him! Zach thought of that when Bella had withdrawn, and left him with his deceitful self. Yes, very deceitful, was this Zachary Fernwell; Bella had given him his true cognomen; he deceived sometimes out of the very love of the thing, and to keep himself in practice. "I don't love her half as well as I love you, upon my soul!" he had said to Bella Evvers, and it might be true enough, judging by what we have seen of this man—the words deceived Bella, at least, and in her romantic misery

afforded her a fragment of consolation. Zach was ashamed of himself that night, for as he turned once more to the fire, and crouched over it, he groaned very heavily and bitterly.

CHAPTER IV.

MARTIN'S PERPLEXITY.

IN a posture similar to that of Zachary Fernwell's, we left Martin Wynn. We return to Griffin Street, to look in upon him after Teddy had departed, watching the fire, as Zach watched some hours after him—as we all watch in our nervous, despondent, or hopeful moments, when the fear or the joy is masked by incertitude.

Martin Wynn was in doubt—more, Martin was vexed. He had plumed himself, almost unwittingly, upon his knowledge of character, and his acute perceptions; in his wise conceit he thought that it was impossible to be deceived in the humanity around him. He had had an intense faith in Teddy, in believing that Teddy concealed nothing from him. It had been a character formed as it were after his own model; he had done his best, and striven very hard to make his protégé an honest, open-hearted man; until that day he had congratulated himself on his success.

“Now, all his ideas were confused, for Teddy had deceived him—had contrived to live in his house and fall in love with his daughter, and no one, not even Christie, the wiser for it. He should have as soon dreamed of Christie deceiving him, as Teddy Fernwell. After all, was it deceit on Teddy's part, or his own foolish blindness?—these were the better thoughts at last of a man who always judged fairly—or tried to do so. After all, what had Teddy done?”

“My own fault, in a great degree,” confessed Martin. “He saw her every day, and he was deeply grateful for her share in his redemption; and surely Christie—God bless her!—is a girl to be loved for herself. Why, when he went away almost without a reason to live with them at Upper Ground Street, I should have guessed it—the whole truth should have dawned upon me then. Poor Teddy!—it was not to be helped, and it was not his fault. He would have died with his secret, had not his honest soul been wrung by

my denunciations of his brother. I begin to think," he added, roughing up his hair the wrong way with both hands, "that I've been a bit of a brute in this matter. I'll go over to Upper Ground Street in the evening."

But he did not go, or he might have had to wonder at Teddy's visit to Zach's lodgings, and to have seen in it, judging by appearances, a collusion between the brothers, and have distrusted both of them; for Martin Wynn was a man, after all, who judged hastily at times.

Late in the afternoon Christie came home from chapel, full of chapel news, and all the small talk of the chapel folk whom she had met. Martin Wynn listened rather dreamily for once—when the gas was lighted over the tea-table, at which Christie presided, the daughter became speedily aware how much the father's dreaminess preponderated.

Yes, sharp people these Wynns; for the gas had not been lighted three minutes when Christie said—

"Has any thing happened since I went away this morning?"

"I should think there had," burst forth the father; "it's just as if every thing horrible had happened to me. I feel perplexed and vexed and miserable."

"You!"

"Ah! it is odd—but it's a fact. I shall shake it off after tea, or when I have told you every thing. I hope that you are prepared for one or two great shocks, my girl, for they are coming."

Christie looked appalled for an instant at this; and then summoned all her strength to the rescue.

"Nothing—about—Teddy?" was her first question.

"Teddy comes last—he is the *dénouement*, and I shall want your advice about him. He has gone away for good—I'll tell you presently."

"Gone—gone away for good! *Teddy!*" emphasized the wondering girl. "Oh, what can have happened! You two have not quarreled, I'm sure!"

"No—we have not quarreled."

"But—"

"But I'll begin at the first chapter, instead of the last, if you will allow me," said Martin; "it's a habit of mine to be methodical. In the first place, then, Mrs. Henwood has been here."

Christie nodded impatiently. This would have been rare news half an hour ago, but it was not to the purport now—it did not affect her life, or her “surroundings.” She listened to the story that Mrs. Henwood had related in that room—or feigned to listen, for there was a fixed stare in her large eyes that might have indicated attention or abstraction. She heard the news with impassibility, at all events—not highly scandalized by Zach’s behavior, not deeply interested in the mother’s trouble, robbed almost of her daughter by the schemer, thinking more of the daughter, as she had seen her last, and of the wild words in which Lettice accused her for what would happen afterward, but regarding every thing as a story that affected her but little—that could be set aside and dwelt upon more fully at a time far more appropriate—a something in which she was interested as in a story, nothing more.

But she was yearning for the next revelation that came nearer home, and wondering why her father was so cruel as to leave it to the last.

Mr. Wynn approached the looked-for topic finally. He took a deep breath, and with his full brown eyes fixed upon his daughter’s face, began:

“I told this tale to Zach’s brother, sparing no comment upon Zach’s duplicity, saying very plainly how base and vile it was to sting the hand that had fostered it, and break down even the pride of the woman who, after her own fashion, had done her best for him. I marked very plainly my abhorrence of this ingratitude; and I called that man a coward, Christie, who hid a secret that was antagonistic to the hopes or the wishes of his benefactor. Then, whatever do you think he said in reply?”

“I know!—I know!” cried Christie, strangely agitated, and with her eyes aflame with an excitement that took the rest of her father’s breath away. “I see it all now from beginning to end, though I dared not fancy so—though I would not tell even myself. What did he say?” she cried, clapping her hands together—“why, that he loved me!—didn’t he, now?—oh! didn’t he?”

“Lord have mercy upon her!—she’s gone mad!” ejaculated Martin Wynn, when he found his voice at last; “what do you mean?—how could you guess all this, and guessing it, to go on in this wild fashion? Aren’t you horrified?”

"Not a bit—I'm proud and happy!—oh! dear, it's almost wicked to say how happy I am!"

"Christie," said Martin, in a very stern voice, "don't say that you have deceived me also?"

"I have deceived myself," she said, stealing toward him, dropping down at his feet, and looking up at him with her hands folded on his knees; "I did not know until to-night how much his happiness was mine, or what I would give to promote it. But I did love to see how utterly unselfish that man was—how good, and true, and noble you had made him; and I think I loved him long ago, when I was sure he looked to you, as we are taught only to look toward our Savior. Oh! if this is wrong, I have done it—I could no more help it than I could help breathing; and if he, of all men, is unhappy, I shall never know a happy moment again!"

She dropped her head upon her hands, and cried a little. Martin sat more bewildered than ever at this evidence of passion in his daughter's nature—she, of all women, so calm, and equable, and maiden-like. He rested his hand upon his daughter's hair, however, and said, gently,

"We must consider this, and see what can evolve from this. It's a pretty mess, now, and no mistake," he added.

Christie looked up, and smiled at him through her tears. There was a pride in her reply, too.

"I do not want to marry him—I will even try to forget him altogether, if you wish it; but he must not be unhappy altogether, and through me."

Martin roughed his hair again, turning every hair the wrong way, and working long and laboriously with his hands, till he looked almost demoniacal about the head.

"It's a puzzle," he said.

"What is?"

"That I did not see it all, and guess all that you did not know, and he tried so well to hide—that is what vexes me," he said, stamping his foot;—"what a mole of a fellow I must be! And then—"

He paused, and looked very grave again.

"And then the past looming behind him, such a black wall of a thing, Chris!" he said; "he fears it himself, and—there, he isn't good enough for *you*, and I don't much like the thought of it."

"He is an honest man—a clever, thoughtful, gentle, and

earnest man—why should you and I taunt him with the evil of which he has repented, and of which repentance those in heaven are glad?"

"Yes, but—"

"But my father has listened too long to Mrs. Henwood," said Christie, archly, "and is thinking of POSITION."

"Now, dash it!" exclaimed Martin Wynn—"that's too bad. I think of position, Christie?—you wicked young woman, who want to marry my assistant!"

"No, I don't want to marry him," asserted Christie—"time enough for me to think of that when he finds the courage to ask me. But I don't want him to be condemned unjustly."

"I'll not condemn him," said Martin; "but it's a fix, for all that. Why, bless us, there's Mr. Ubbs to consider!"

"Oh! I told him a few weeks ago that I was afraid that I should never be able to love him as he deserved."

"And what did he say?"

"That he hoped I should in time, when I knew how very good he was—that ten years hence would suit him, because he was a very patient man, and in no immediate hurry."

"Ah! then, Ubbs will not be cut up very much—but he was the man, Chris. As for this Teddy, I'm not quite sure—I can't be sure."

He was not quite sure all that evening; all the next day Teddy, the absent, was a topic for intense thought over his work—the more so that his daughter Christie shunned all farther allusion to him, and became thoughtful herself. Martin Wynn reviewed the past in all its *minutiae*, and saw much to admire in Teddy—how steadily and earnestly he had progressed, and what confidence he had always had in the master. A wonderful change in this man, but still scarcely the man for Christie—scarcely good enough. Martin was not proud, we know, but he shrank from the alliance; he understood the world, and though he professed not to study it, yet he paid a certain amount of attention to its whisperings, and he knew what it would say. Still he loved Teddy almost like a son, and he missed him very much. He would do nothing in a hurry, so he let another day go by, and had another "long think" to himself, vexed within himself at Teddy's silence.

Suddenly he started off in the evening to Upper Ground

Street, catching Teddy at home, with the watchman and Polly, a few minutes before eight in the evening. Teddy crimsoned at the sudden appearance of Martin Wynn in their midst; but he rose and took the hand extended to him, gripping it spasmodically.

"Glad to see you, Martin," said old Mr. Wynn; "although it's close on eight, and there's never much chance of a long talk with you. Christie is well, I hope?"

"Yes—very well."

Martin sat down, and placed his hat on his knees; he was doubtful how to begin the subject, or how much, or how little, his father or sister might know of Teddy's story.

"When are you coming back to work?" he asked, a little abruptly.

"Who?—I, sir?" exclaimed Teddy, turning very red again.

"There's no good to follow idling time away; and if your brother has put you out a bit, why, it's soon got over by a strong mind."

"Yes, sir—soon got over."

Mr. Wynn, senior, exclaimed at the same time, "His brother!" and Polly cried out, "Oh! that Zach of ours! No harm to him, I hope?"

"Harm in him a little," answered Martin, seizing the opportunity to account for Teddy's absence from business, although doubting its effect, or how much Teddy had confessed; "Zach and Mrs. Henwood have had a quarrel, about business matters and a few other things, and in expressing my opinion upon Zach, Teddy grew warm in his brother's defense, and we scarcely understood each other, for the first time in our lives."

Martin Wynn, it may be seen, could prevaricate. We regret to record this want of perfection in him, but the correctness of our narrative must be respected.

"I did not defend my brother," answered Teddy, bluntly; "he was in the wrong—I said so."

"What is it all about?" exclaimed Polly; "mayn't we hear?"

"Ain't we good enough to be trusted with a secret?" said the old gentleman, tetchily; "about the boy, too, in whose rise we've all had a hand. Teddy, I'm ashamed of you, not to tell us before this!"

"Teddy shall tell you all after I have gone, father," said Martin; "he did not consider himself justified without my permission; and it is a story that Mrs. Henwood would not like to have circulated."

"Mrs. Henwood has had lots of confidence in me," replied his father; "or I should not be still in her service at my time of life."

"N-no," said Martin, with a scowl at the carpet, "you wouldn't. If she had a little less, it would be better for your health."

"I was never better in my life," affirmed Mr. Wynn, senior; "if your hateful pride didn't worry me so much."

"My pride!" said Martin; "that's a good joke."

Martin objected to any remarks on his pride, it may be seen. Accusations of that character were sure to disturb him. But Mr. Wynn, senior, was inclined to be aggravating that evening; he had a firm belief that he had been slighted and kept in the dark; and though naturally a patient man, we know that he was inclined to stand upon his rights. Martin had no chance of soothing him before he went away; time was up, and the watchman always took time to subside. He departed with an assumption of dignity, and Martin, ruffled in the faintest degree—he had been ruffled all the week—returned to the one subject that had brought him to the house. Polly would have dashed in with Zach's case again—thinking naturally enough that Zach's case was Teddy's—when Martin stopped her.

"Do talk about all this, Polly, when I'm gone," he said quite fretfully; "haven't I had enough argument with the old gentleman, and won't he stew away all night at the wharf, if I don't look him up as I go back?"

"You're much more *touchy* than you used to be, Martin," said his sister.

"I'm getting old and querulous," replied her brother; "and I always disliked interruptions. Now, Teddy," turning to his late assistant, who was eying him askance, "when are you going to answer my question?"

"When am I coming back to work?" said Teddy; "why, what's the use, sir, of putting such a question to me?"

"I don't know a question that is more natural."

Teddy looked his master full in the face and answered him,

"Never, sir."

"That's a resolution I must shake, or I shall think you bear me malice, Teddy."

"Malice, sir!" echoed the other; "all the good will in my heart, I bear you, and whatever happens, or however ill you may hereafter think of me, I shall continue to bear. But I shall never come back to Griffin Street!"

"Why not?"

Teddy looked toward Polly, and hesitated to reply. Martin hesitated for an instant to press the question, then his frankness asserted itself.

"It's no use going on like this—we shall be worried to death with her suspicions, if we keep her in the dark. Polly, this young fellow here thinks that he likes Christie too well, and had better stay away."

"Good gracious! if I didn't think as much!"

"Ah! you're a woman!" was her brother's disparaging remark. "I thought that there was little use in keeping you in the dark."

"Do go on, please."

And Polly folded her little fat hands in her lap, and became full of intense interest in this love-story. She had not had a love-story to amuse herself with since she was a girl.

"I had an idea that he had better stay away too," continued Martin; "but I think that Christie can keep out of his way, now I have put her on her guard," he added, dryly; "and, at all events, I can not part with him, pupil, friend, and son!"

Teddy might have taken much hope from those words, had he been a sanguine man; but he had long ago made up his mind, and no brighter mood of Martin Wynn could change him now.

"Thank you, sir," he added, looking down; "but I have thought it all over during the last two days, and I shall stay away for good. So much the better, sir, I'm sure, for all of us."

"But—"

"I signed for six months with Stanley and Burns yesterday," said Teddy, thinking that the easier method to dispose of an argument that pained him.

"You were in a hurry," said Martin, "and they were in

a hurry, too, to secure a good hand, and throw me over. Well, it's a settler!"

Martin Wynn put his hat on his head.

"Don't act so hastily another time, Teddy," he said; "impulse is a bad thing, and may lead you the wrong road."

"I am on the right road now, sir."

"Without me, you mean? Your own master, to make new friends, and shake off the old!"

"I have confidence in myself—I shake off no old friends, though it may be right—it *is* right," he affirmed, with emphasis, "to shake me off."

"Who is thinking of that?" asked Martin.

"I hope you are," said Teddy. "If you have changed your mind, you pain me. For, oh! sir, it was wrong in me not to tell you that there was one temptation I could not fight against. I hid it from you, and found my guilty happiness in seeing her sometimes."

"Lucky for Christie that she did not find you out—and take your part against the parent, like Mrs. Henwood's daughter," said Martin.

"That was not likely," answered Teddy, receiving Martin's words more seriously than they were intended; "but if it had been—supposing for one instant, sir, that it had been—do you know what I should have done?"

"Married her on the sly, and come to me for forgiveness afterward?"

"I should have *disappeared*!" said Teddy, "for your sake and her own, at the first suspicion—I should have been heard of no more!"

"For my sake, by way of return, I understand this," said Martin; "but why for her sake?"

"I am not fit for her," he answered, sadly; "no after life—no after penitence can make me fit for her. I would be her slave if she despised me, but I would not be her husband, for her own sake, if she loved me. There, all this is very foolish—I have told you this before—you and I together have looked back more than once at the prison shadows—at the boy thief! Sir, I shall never come to Griffin Street again—I respect you and her too much—I have given you pain, and been ungrateful to you both. Keep away from me, and leave me to my life of atonement for the error."

Teddy darted out of the room—out of the house into the street. It was at a late hour when he returned, and went cautiously up stairs into his own room, without bidding even Polly Wynn good-night.

CHAPTER V.

ZACH OFFERS HIS RESIGNATION.

MRS. HENWOOD was in great trouble. All her costly furniture, staff of servants, the finest set of diamonds of any one of her acquaintance, all the money at her bankers' and in the funds, all the money still pouring in through the profitable channels of her two great wharfs—all the pleasure that her dazzling world could offer, could not on this occasion take one grain of heaviness away.

She had been terribly disappointed; she had been cruelly deceived in her own daughter; she had looked forward to that daughter being a comfort to her, as well as a companion, until Lettice married some one of good birth and position, adding thereby an extra radiance to the house of Henwood. She was mortified, too, to the uttermost; for she had never liked this Zachary in her heart, and had long ago repented of her charity toward him. It had been a mad freak, and she reaped now the penalty of her rashness, by the ingratitude which followed it. She had had no faith in these Fernwells, and yet had been fool enough to be talked into adopting one of them; if she had but held aloof in her pride and stateliness, how much the better for her! She had gone out of her way to meet her own humiliation.

She thought of herself first—but she thought of her daughter in the second place, and felt that no happiness to Lettice could ensue from the union. She was sure of it; poor judge of character as she was, she saw the craftiness of the nephew, and the motive which had lured him on better than the eccentric girl whom he had hoodwinked. She put forth all her power to stop the match, but became conscious of her own futility. She made preparations for leaving England once more, but Lettice refused to go at the eleventh hour; she threatened Lettice with Zach's dismissal from the firm, and Lettice replied that on the first day

of Zach's departure from office she would become his wife; Lettice was firm, and the mother knew too well that she would keep her word. And that mother was *not* a firm woman, Lettice knew—obstinate at times, but weak-minded, capricious, and with a woman's habit of deferring matters of moment to a future day.

It all ended in a truce—a hollow truce, with not a great deal of confidence on either side. Zach was to retain his post at the wharf, but Lettice was not to see him. Lettice might write to him if she pleased; it was against her mother's wish, but it was not part of the compact, and whether Zach wrote to Lettice or not, did not matter to the mother; she was weary of the subject, and she was only hopeful of some unforeseen event turning her daughter's mind to other thoughts. Lettice had maintained that she would be true to Zach, but she had also said that she would await her mother's consent; that she would refrain from seeing her lover, provided that mother forced no fresh suitor on her, and did not interfere with her in any way. So the truce signed and sealed, and all the elements of discord in that house at Wimbledon, "a difference" between the mother and the daughter, "a difference" in every thing in consequence.

Mrs. Henwood took Lettice into society, summoned society to Wimbledon; she had great faith in fresh faces and new flatterers, for they had been of service to *her*. Even now they kept her from wholly breaking down; although she was a miserable woman enough, directly the last carriage had driven away with the last guests.

Lettice was not happy either. She did not give her mother credit for any affection toward her; she knew the vanity and worldliness of her mother, and she treasured in remembrance, as though it was a wrong, the isolation of her childhood, that had had no evidence of a mother's love or interest to gladden it. A thoughtful girl—but a girl who thought at right angles, as it were, and brooded on many fancies till they took the semblance of injuries. Vain in her way too—self-willed and obdurate, with many good traits of character fighting very hard to come uppermost, but buried under the mannerisms and the foibles of her nature. Spoiled in the teaching like Zach—like many others without earnest eyes upon them, and good influences at

work to develop the virtues in bud. A woman impressed with a wrong idea, and convinced that it was right—naturally, therefore, the hardest woman to manage in the world, and far beyond all management of Mrs. Henwood.

Mrs. Henwood had sought Martin Wynn's advice, but the marqueterie-worker had told her to talk like a mother to Lettice—as if Lettice cared for her mother, or the mother had not already done her best! Martin Wynn had seen the impracticable nature of her task, and so put her off with a few fine words, that meant nothing. She called Mr. Tinchester to her side, despite her verdict expressed in public on the little sense that he possessed; she was anxious to know all that threatened her from every quarter.

She told the story to the faithful manager—a good manager, if a little slow and old-fashioned for the times—but Mr. Tinchester had long ago seen Zach's ability, and had intrusted much of the management to Zach, thankful for more ease, and confident in the capabilities of the junior. Moreover, he liked Zach, who had made himself agreeable to him, and studied his idiosyncrasies. Mr. Tinchester was surprised at the revelation, but not shocked.

"A nephew," he said; "the business, my dear madam, could not be in better hands—it ought to keep to the Henwoods while one of the name is left."

"To think that you have come all the way down here to talk like this!" was Mrs. Henwood's feeble plaint. "I don't like Zachary—he's not straightforward—he's not affectionate—he's not truthful."

"He's a very good business man—he's a genius at business—of course I do not know if he would make your daughter a good husband," said Mr. Tinchester; "that depends, I presume, upon their liking for one another."

"Supposing that I made this man my enemy—that I turned him away?" asked Mrs. Henwood.

"Turned him away!—dismissed him as sub-manager, do you mean?"

Mrs. Henwood nodded. There was a terrible craving to defy him and her daughter together, and act her father's part. If she had been less lonely—had more children to fall back upon—loved Lettice even less, she would have done it long since.

"Yes—what could he do?"

"I think that he could do us a great deal of harm."

"And he so young!—and the business so long established!—nonsense!"

Mr. Tinchester thought, with a little dismay, of how the reins had long since been given into the hands of this fast-driving young man; how the business had increased; how it had been Zach's business to know every body, and to ingratiate himself with every body worth his while. How he had had every confidence in Zachary, and trusted to him, more especially of later months, in every thing. An uncomfortable feeling began to creep over him too, that he had been deceived by this junior manager's energy.

"Pray don't dismiss him yet a while," said Mr. Tinchester; "let me make quite sure of the extent of his power. You see, he is thoroughly a business man. I have always fancied, you know," he said, apologizing indirectly for his great confidence in Zach, "that you would make him a partner. Indeed, now I come to think of it, he hinted as much to me in confidence nine months ago."

"You're not a match for him—you're too weak and soft, Mr. Tinchester."

"Oh, no, I'm not!" said Mr. Tinchester, flushing up.

"I can't see any good in your advice. I will advise you to look more sharply after my interests in future. I think that you have been neglecting them."

"I've been doing my best—the business has increased."

"Through him—I see his plan. The name of Henwood will not be lost yet, if he does not change it. I am a miserable woman, and no one thinks of me!"

"Pardon me, madam—you're wrong."

Mrs. Henwood knew that, knew, too, that this perky little gentleman had his ambition also, and loved her as well—or almost as well—as the wharves.

"I'm not."

"You may always rely upon me, Mrs. Henwood, to serve you faithfully—to set your interests ever before my own. Some day, when you are tired of the world, and see how false half the people are in it, I have a hope—a faint one—that you—"

"That I will take you into partnership, as well as my nephew!" she exclaimed. "I think that you have had a liberal salary, and that there is nothing to complain about."

"Madam, my dear madam, I don't complain. I thank heaven that I am a contented man."

"Then, goodness me! why don't you hold your tongue?"

There was a pleasure in exacting obedience yet from those who served her; it revived Mrs. Henwood to think that in this quarter she reigned paramount. She was better in spirits that day—though Mr. Tinchester had not left behind him any consolation.

The following day, to her amazement and confusion, the servant brought in the card of Mr. Zachary Fernwell.

"I told him not to come here. He has broken the compact between us all," she cried, to the footman's surprise. "Where is he?"

"In the drawing-room."

Mrs. Henwood deliberated on the expediency of refusing him an interview; thought of Mr. Tinchester, then of Lettice, and lastly of some hidden danger which she felt was hanging over her.

"I will come to him," she said.

In a few minutes afterward she entered the room where her nephew awaited her, and bowed very coldly to his respectful salutation.

"I don't think that it is fair to come," she said in a voice that was less measured than her bow had been; "you are not acting fairly in this matter."

"Pardon me, Mrs. Henwood," replied Zachary, "but I will ask you not to judge me unfairly till I have explained my presence here. My business is urgent, or I should not have intruded."

Mrs. Henwood dropped into an easy-chair, and endeavored to compose herself. But her hands trembled, and she was vexed that she could not conceal her agitation. Up to that period she had plumed herself on her deportment, her grace and ease and general coolness in difficult positions—but she was inferior to that young man confronting her, and she could have struck at him for his advantage over her.

"Say what you have to say, and be gone!" she said peevishly.

"I am very sorry, Mrs. Henwood, to note this difference in your manner—to find you still against me," commenced Zach respectfully, but firmly. "I had a hope that time, the ties of kindred, your interest in your daughter's happiness,

would have finally done much for me. To say that I am disappointed, and that your harshness pains me very much, is not to express half the regret which I feel on this occasion."

"You have not treated me well," said Mrs. Henwood, "and I shall not forgive you, unless—"

"Unless," repeated Zach.

"Unless you give up Lettice—resign that claim upon her, obtained unworthily and in hostility to me. Give her up," cried Mrs. Henwood, "and name your price."

Whether the temptation crossed the mind of Zachary Fernwell to accept the proposition is doubtful—Zach's mind was crossed by strange thoughts very often, and this might have been one of them. He paused and considered, but it might not have been of his chances without Lettice; it did not appear so from his after speech. But, at all events, he paused, and Mrs. Henwood thought that there lurked a hope for her in his silence.

"Mrs. Henwood, I love your daughter," Zach said at last. "I will respect your wish, and not seek to inveigle your daughter into a marriage without your consent, but I will only give her up at her request."

"She is spell-bound—and you know it."

"She has preferred me to men who might have made her offers more advantageous in a worldly point of view—whose positions at the present hour at least are brighter than my own—and I can not be the first to break the spell at which you scoff."

"You have not come to Wimbledon to tell me this?"

"No, madam."

Zach spoke very deliberately, watching keenly the effect of every word upon his aunt. He had come to play his last card in the great game, and he was, for all his outward coolness, nervous concerning the result. He would not betray to her all that was trembling in the balance, and how that afternoon's decision would decide his future.

"I have come, Mrs. Henwood, to offer my resignation as sub-manager of your business. In that business you, I think, will not reproach me with having served you unfaithfully. The account of that stewardship, which I am prepared to render, will show that I have done my best to add many hundreds to your annual income."

"I did not want more money," said his aunt—"I only

wanted my daughter to myself. If you had served me as well in this house as at the wharf, I might have had reason to rejoice."

"I would have made your daughter very happy as my wife."

"No, no. I do not believe that."

"Well, I dare not argue that question with you—it pains me, and excites you—it is foreign to my mission here. Mrs. Henwood, I can not remain in the service of a lady who mistrusts my honesty of purpose."

"You must go, then," said Mrs. Henwood; "I am glad that it has come to this—that this is your step, not mine."

"A step brought about by your suspicions," corrected Zach; "do not reproach me for all that may ensue from it."

"Ensnue from it?" repeated his aunt—"you will not seek to lure Lettice away from me?"

"As your servant I was tied to obligations which exist no longer—but I will not marry her, I repeat, without your consent. It is her wish, and mine. We may have been wrong to love one another, but we had faith in you and your generosity. I was not alluding to Lettice, or my love for her, when I spoke of what might happen."

"Will you explain?"

"Madam, I give up my office under you, but it is not my intention to starve in consequence. I can not go back to the streets, or to a petty clerkship—that I consider, justly or unjustly, beneath the abilities that I possess. You brought me up—and I thank you for it very gratefully—with grand ideas of life, and I can not sink that new nature, which you bestowed upon me. I will do credit to your teaching, for I will rise in life, or cut my throat!"

"Don't talk like that," said the shocked Mrs. Henwood—"that's not proper talk, and says little for your bringing up. I never paid for that notion being instilled into you."

"Next week—my resignation having been accepted by yourself—will see me general manager of a new company, based upon the warehousing and wharfage principle."

"In opposition—eh?"

"No, not in opposition," said Zach—"far from it. There may be a little honest competition, and I will work very hard for that company's success, for on that depends my after life."

"Who will take up your shares?"

"Three fourths of them will be subscribed for to-morrow—this will not be a bubble company, for I am well known in the City, and the City has already confidence in me."

"You have schemed very well, Zachary Fernwell, I do not doubt," said Mrs. Henwood; "you may have ingratiated yourself with those who have supported us for many years—you may get your place, make your fortune, and rob us of our trade. Well, I may be sorry for the loss of income, but there is no one to come after me, and you can not despoil me of that which I have already earned. You must do your worst for me, and your best for yourself," she added, rising with more dignity than she had ever shown before in life—life having been with her all superficiality; "but I accept your resignation."

"Very well, madam."

Zachary's lips compressed, but he betrayed no emotion, though his disappointment was keen. He had laid the ground of his new venture; he had not threatened in vain, for the power to do harm was in his hands; but he knew the quicksands still in the way of success, and what an army of bloodsuckers hangs to the young life of a company. He had built too much on Mrs. Henwood's love of money, and consideration for her own place in the world; and now there remained for him but the venture of which he had spoken. It would be successful, he thought, for it would have powerful backers; but how much better it would have been for Mrs. Henwood to have taken him into partnership, or have raised his salary as manager, giving him Lettice to wife, and, with Lettice, the handsomest dowry in her power to bestow.

"Very well, madam," he said, "I am to consider myself free. For all sakes, I regret it."

He went to the door, and paused there, but she did not ask him to stop. He went out of the room, closing the door behind him, and pausing again on the mat without, lest he should be called for even yet; he went out of the house at last, with a bitter oath, that it was as well no ears but his own heard on that occasion.

"Now, for myself!" he cried; "with mercy on no one in my way!"

Mrs. Henwood remained in the drawing-room, pondering on Zach's words. They had hurt her pride, they had dis-

tressed her about the business even—a year or two ago she would have succumbed to Zach, for the sake of the wealth that that business brought to her. But she had altered—she was sure that she had altered very much—her world was a gairish, unsympathetic place, with no one to live in it; and in the crowd that changed to and fro there, like the glasses in the children's toy, there was not one that showed upon its varnished face one look of love for her. She would have been more happy, if she had been less rich, she thought. Alas! it never struck her that with the same faults of vanity, selfishness, and want of all interest in pure and holy things, there was no estate that could have brought her one scrap more comfort in her tribulation. In health and strength, with the power to enjoy pleasure, her world was fair enough; but with health failing, and the night coming on, what a world to hope for solace in! She reached her hand out and touched the bell, full of a new thought.

"Where is Miss Henwood?"

"In her room, madam."

"I wish to speak to her at once."

In a few minutes Lettice Henwood, grave, inflexible, and with a heavy cast of countenance, loomed upon the mother.

"You sent for me?"

"Yes—sit down, Lettice, and don't worry me by an exhibition of more impatience than you can help. You know who has been here?"

"Yes."

"You have seen him?" cried the suspicious mother.

"No."

"He came to-day to offer me his resignation, and I accepted it," said Mrs. Henwood; "it was his own doing, and not my revenge—I am not a revengeful woman. Next week he starts a company that will do its best to ruin me—to destroy that business connected so long with our name."

"You have driven him to this."

"How could I drive him?"

"He begins the world for himself, dependent on his own exertions," cried Lettice, bursting through her assumed stoicism of behavior; "it was what I advised him to do long since. Why should he receive your money, and be taunted by the sneers with which his wages are doled out to him? Now I can go to him free-handed, and say, 'Zach, you are

a nobler fellow than I thought you, and you shall not toil alone!"

"You think not of his ingratitude to me?"

"I admire him for his independence."

"And you will go away to him without my consent?"

"I shall be happy with him—I never shall be happy here."

"Go, then—leave me alone if you like—I will not be distressed continually like this. Look at my face since you have resisted my authority—why, good God! it is the face of a woman of sixty!"

It was strange how the woman's vanity leaped forth, still influencing her actions even in that hour. Had it not hovered so closely upon tragedy, we could have afforded still to smile at it.

"I have not been happy here—you have not understood me," cried Lettice; "I have tried you patiently, waiting patiently for a sign of your relenting, to prove that I studied your pride amid it all. But you kept firm and cruel, and I will not help you now."

"I never was a good hand at riddles—I don't want any riddles from you," said Mrs. Henwood; "if you will leave me, do so."

"I will."

"But he shall not have a penny of my money at any time. He loves you but for that, I know. Why, every action of his dastard life proves that. He shall starve!"

"He shall not!" cried the defiant Lettice; "if he fail in life, I will make him rich!"

"Pah!—I defy you!"

Lettice flashed up, a tigress at this defiance.

"Wait here an instant," she said, "I will return."

She left the room, and came back an instant afterward with a yellow parchment in her hands. Mrs. Henwood looked with horror at it; fraught with a new suspicion, that came to her in that moment to unnerve her.

"Where did you get that? What is it?"

"It is an assignment of the Warwickshire property to the Fernwells—your father's deed of gift—revoking, nullifying that will which disinherited Zach's mother. I found it in the secret drawer of the old cabinet, the day Martin Wynn came here."

"And it gives those estates—"

"To his daughter, Ellen Fernwell, and to her husband, until the children are of age—then the children take their share with the parents."

"He never meant it to be seen—my father hid it out of very shame. Give it me!"

"He repented—he says so in this document; but he left it to your mother to give up the property to the Fernwells, and your mother died before him. Those estates were sold for £80,000."

"Money to go away from me to those thieves—to Fernwell, the tramp, above all! Well, well, you must ruin me between you. I am a defenseless woman, and can not stand against you all!"

She closed her eyes, and lay back helplessly; she was defeated; at all turns of her road there stood an enemy to baffle her—here, at the last, her own daughter!

Lettice came to her side, and dropped suddenly before her, clasping her arms about her neck.

"Why should we fight and scheme like this, mamma, when we can all be happy? Why turn against me and Zach, distrusting both of us?"

"I only distrust him!"

"Give your consent to our marriage, and take Zach into partnership, binding him by ties of gratitude to you, and thus indirectly restoring to him his rights, and we," sinking her voice, "will say nothing of this deed."

"Yes—yes—we had better not say any thing about it," whispered the mother.

"The father is a villain, we know—the brother was a vagabond and thief years ago—only Zach deserves the fortune."

"He would have wished it, if he had lived—my father would," said Mrs. Henwood, gasping yet with the surprise that had overtaken her; "in his grave he would rise to protest against the money being poured into such hands—I'm sure he would. And I could not bear the excitement of a lawsuit, perhaps. Yes, yes, we'll burn it!"

"And Zach?"

"He shall be a partner to-morrow—you may write to him to-night in my name—and be married to him when you please. I swear it!—I swear it! Give me that deed."

"And we shall be better friends. To spare you all that you dread, I sin for you!"

"No, I take all the blame. See here!"

She snatched at the deed, and cast it into the fire, turning round with gleaming eyes to Lettice.

"Are we friends now? Can we keep this ever a secret? Can we trust each other, after this?" she asked, with hands extended.

"Yes."

They held each other's hands, and looked at the deed burning out the last hopes of the Fernwell family. If Richard Fernwell, exulting in his income of a hundred and fifty pounds per annum, could but have known how many thousands he had lost that day! So this strange mother and daughter made friends—but at what a price, and at what a sacrifice!

* * * * *

The month was not out when the *Times* informed the world, through the medium of its first column, that Zachary Henwood had taken to wife the only daughter of the late Septimus Henwood, of Tooley Street and Upper Ground Street.

A day or two previously it had been formally announced, by public advertisement, that Zachary Fernwell had resolved upon taking the name of Henwood from that date, and neither Government interfered, nor the public demurred, no one losing a farthing by the change.

It was a quiet wedding—there were some tears shed over it. Perhaps Arabella Evvers, an uninvited guest, shivering in a back pew, watchful of the ceremony, shed tears the most bitter over the hopes that had died with Zach's marriage.

BOOK V.

LOVE IN THE SHADE

CHAPTER I.

THE JUNIOR PARTNER.

THE business of Henwood and Henwood, wharfingers, warehousemen, and general consignees—general any thing that would bring money into the business—throve apace. With new blood in the firm, it took a new lease of life, and people City way said that the Henwoods were coining money.

The new partner, Zachary Henwood, formerly sub-manager, worked more arduously than ever at the business. He had attained the summit of his desires, marrying Mrs. Henwood's daughter, and becoming partner in the firm, but he worked not the less hard; he was possessed with the craving to become rich, and it beset him at every turn of his career, and allowed him little rest. He was mounting the ladder now, and he would not balk his ascent by lingering on the way. He was ambitious, and he *would* rise; he knew that he was shrewd and clever, and that every thing before him was handy to his will, and must bring rare percentages. Mrs. Henwood had no cause to complain of the want of industry in her partner; he was a credit to the firm; he kept up the old name of Henwood, every member of that illustrious family having done considerable homage to Mammon in his day.

Whether Zach was happy in his high estate we may consider presently; industry is a sign of happiness, a wiseacre has observed, and the young partner was industry itself. The long nights at the office, after office hours, were his still; he was indefatigable in his efforts; there were times

when men might prophesy that his greed of gain would kill him.

But he worked on; he made good bargains and drove hard ones—he spared no man in his way, and he strove and struggled for his cash as men who have known privation early in life will strive sometimes. From those who had shared privations with him he held himself aloof; he wanted no obstacles in his way to independence.

He was no hero, that the reader can see for himself. His natural virtues—he was set up in life with but a sparse proportion of them—did not expand or flower forth in the sun of his prosperity, but shriveled and contracted with the heat. He was a man at his worst, when the prize was in his grasp—good-fortune spoiled Zach Fernwell utterly.

He became vain of his position in the world, the wealth at his command, and the name he bore in the City—to society, that society upon which he believed he had a right to thrust himself, he was urbane and pleasant, but he looked down upon the life whence he had arisen, and in his mercantile career he was hard, pushing, ravenous. Old servants at the warehouse, old as Charles Wynn almost, drew comparisons between Zach and the Henwoods who had reigned before him. He was like the rest of them; he was wondrously like his predecessors, they said, a restless money-grubber, with no soul above the bales and casks that went in and out all day.

Zach was at work in Tooley Street as usual—in his office where a hundred letters were written a day, and a hundred people called to see the manager—when a messenger brought in a card, at which Zach stared and bit his lip. Zach's face had become a face hard to guess at; pale, cold, and expressionless, scarcely moving a muscle, and never on any pretense brightening up with a smile, and the signs of vexation at this moment were things to surprise the subordinate.

“Show him in—and tell every one else that I am out, and shall not return for an hour.”

“Yes, sir.”

The messenger retired, and Zach set down his pen, and took in an extra button across his narrow chest, as though preparing for a contest. He became very hard and repellent in that instant, his looks presaging no good to him who was advancing.

"He has brought it on himself by coming here," he muttered; "the time has changed, and it is my turn."

The door opened, and Mr. Richard Fernwell was admitted. He was tolerably well dressed, wearing a smart frock-coat with watered-silk lapels, and a red rose in his button-hole. He flourished a white hat in one hand, and a walking-cane in the other. Zach's annual stipend had evidently done wonders for him, or been the foundation for wonders. Twelve months since father and son had met in the Yarmouth rows; six months since Zachary Henwood's marriage.

"I have the pleasure to salute you," said Mr. Fernwell, with a low bow as he advanced. "I am behindhand with my congratulations at your rise in life, but they are none the less hearty for being offered late in the day."

"What do you want here?" was the abrupt inquiry.

"*Ma foi!* haven't I told you?"

"You have broken faith with me by coming to the office. I said that I would not have it!"

Zachary spoke through his set teeth, and looked defiance across his desk at the intruder.

"Oh! to the devil with your braggadocio!" exclaimed Mr. Fernwell, losing his suave manners on the instant, "that will not go down with me—your father, sir. Don't you know enough of me to feel assured that this kind of thing is a very grave mistake?"

"On your side—yes," said Zach.

"I offend you," said Fernwell, dropping into a chair, and then bringing it by degrees to the other side of the low desk at which his son was seated; "I am a *bête noire*—the villain of a melodrama, turning up at unseasonable periods to cast a shade on your rejoicing—the convict father of whom you would be quit. So be it, friend—the Fates have determined that there shall be a cloud to every life—make the best of yours."

"I will."

"Make the best of me," added Fernwell; "I am not a man to render myself unpleasant—if convenient to you to keep me in the background, it is a mere question of that money which is now no question with you."

"Ay, but it is."

"You can't plead bills to take up, pressure of the mark-

ets, rise in the rate of discount to me—keep those poor excuses for your customers.”

Zachary took up the pen again, and began to write.

“You will excuse me, but my time is valuable. Have you any thing more to say?”

“Damn it, I should think I had!” cried Fernwell; “I want money.”

“You have had your quarter’s salary.”

“I will have no wretched salary doled out to me—I told you that I would rise as you rose, and, by heaven, I sha’n’t break my word!”

Zach commenced a letter.

“I have been speculating, Zach,” said his father; “betting a little on the favorite—winning in one case, unfortunately in another coming suddenly to grief. The fate of betting-men in the aggregate, I fear—a sad moral, but reminding me also of a sad necessity. Are you listening, you dog?”

Mr. Fernwell shouted forth his last inquiry, bringing his clenched fist down upon the desk. The coolness and indifference of his son were too much for his own powers of self-command—he had been always a bully, and had never studied the art of repression.

Zach leaned back in his chair, pen in hand still, and looked steadily into his father’s face. Mr. Fernwell felt uncomfortable; for the son was perfectly at his ease, and seemed to fear him no more. He was not the nervous, craven lad whom he had known hitherto.

“Mr. Fernwell,” said Zach, “I am sorry to be a witness to this ebullition of temper—it lowers you and distresses me. I would ask you to call again, if I ever intended to let you into the premises.”

“To let me in!”

“You want more money—I have no more money to give away. You grumble at the lowness of your salary—another word, and I withdraw it altogether.”

“What!—what!” gasped the father, “you defy me, then?”

“I can afford to defy you. Yes.”

“By all the torments,” began Fernwell, “I will blast your name in the city—your position—your chance with Mrs. Henwood—I will tell all—all!”

“Enough,” said Zach, flinging down his pen. “I warned

you, and you took no warning. I lavish no more money away—I will not give you another sixpence. Leave the place, and do your worst.”

“I will go at once to Mrs. Henwood.”

“I have already warned her of you—she would as soon see you as a wild beast, and as soon believe in you as in the devil.”

“She shall believe me.”

“She may even do so, if it be possible for the fervor of your narrative to take effect. Mrs. Henwood is my partner, and in *my* power now!”

Mr. Fernwell thrust his hands into his pockets, and muttered innumerable oaths. He saw at once the weakness of his position, and the strength of his son's. The rich woman's daughter was his son's wife now, and the son the ruling agent of the firm. He himself was powerless to act; his facts were hard to be believed at any time—and credit given for them now, what harm could be done? He had been a fool to come here with his bombast and his threats; but then he had been a fool and a poor schemer all his life.

“Twelve months ago, it was a matter of necessity to fee you into silence,” said Zach; “but it was never my intention to continue to pay you an annual sum as the price of your vile treatment of me. The evil that you can do me is not worth averting.”

“You will not take away my—my income?”

“I have made up mind. I never change it.”

“I tell you—”

Zachary touched the hand-bell at his side.

“What's that for?” demanded Fernwell.

“I am about to order you to be thrust into the street, or to be given in charge to the police for coming here with threats of extortion. Which would you prefer?”

Mr. Fernwell moved his menacing eyebrows to and fro, and Zach could hear his teeth grate. The bright hopes that the thief had had in coming there—the fancy visions based on his son's fears, were fading all away, leaving himself in danger.

“Come, come, that's too bad—let's be more on the square than this,” he said at last; “deuce take it, don't throw me over all at once, Zach. Here, my good fellow,” he said hurriedly to the messenger who entered the room, “we rang

for a glass of water, that's all—cold water, of course—and bring it in ten minutes.”

Zach did not countermand this extraordinary request, and the messenger withdrew again.

“Zach, I'll go away—I'll never come any more if you keep up the income, and don't make an enemy of me like this. Your own father, Zach!”

“I knew that you would come here one day with your threats,” said Zach, “and I prepared for them. I laid the ground months ago for this, feeling that the sooner we understood each other the better. Why don't you wreak all the malice on me that you can?”

“I don't wish you any harm. There isn't a more peaceable fellow in the world than I am. This is the second time that I've seen you since you were twelve years old, and yet you grumble!”

“Take my advice, and—go.”

“But the money?—the hundred and fifty pounds a year?”

“I always keep my word. I said that it was *withdrawn*.”

“By—but you don't want me to starve?—to turn thief again?”

Zach hesitated, or appeared to hesitate. It was part of the scene for which he had rehearsed, but the father took it for signs of relenting.

“An old man—getting on now in years—and with all his faults, your father,” implored Fernwell.

“Ah! my father, damn him!” answered the unfilial Zach—“well, I will be quit of him for good—I will give him two hundred pounds *now* to help him on to his last chance, if he will never let me see or hear of him again.”

“I'll take it.”

“We will make it out as a debt—an I O U affair,” said Zach coolly, “so that if you appear I shall arrest you, and put you in a debtor's prison by way of a change, while debtors' prisons last. I am 'sorry to say that they are nearly out of fashion.”

Zach proceeded to business at once; he dashed off the I O U; he dashed off the check for the amount that he had mentioned; as an after-thought he dashed off for his father's signature a form of recantation for slanders of various kinds, and which were acknowledged as wholly base and groundless; then he put the pen into Mr. Fernwell's hands.

Mr. Fernwell would have signed any thing at that moment to get the money promised him—the Fiend in the German legend would have driven an easy bargain for signatures with Mr. Fernwell at that juncture: he would have signed all day any documents in the world, and any name that was required for that matter, for the sum which Zach passed over to him.

Outside the wharf, and making for Zach's bankers, keeping his left hand in his trowsers pocket, and his check clutched in his left hand, he looked every inch the worthless wretch that he was.

"If it ever comes my turn again," said Richard Fernwell, "I will remember this day. I'll drag him down—or kill him!"

CHAPTER II.

HALF MAD.

To turn to Martin Wynn's house, and to note the progress or the changes therein, is not to distress the reader with a long description. We have seen that Martin Wynn's life was a quiet one—troubled by little that was extraordinary, and kept free from those great misfortunes which make their mark in novels. Martin's was a quiet life; had it not been for Teddy crossing his career, and puzzling him in the latter days—were it not for a few stormy elements to come—we might add, an uneventful life.

Peaceable men, taking life peaceably, and doing their duty in it by helping others to peace with that strength and energy which develop themselves in "the crisis," are still to be found here and there.

Martin had his little troubles, of course; latterly there was Teddy to perplex him, and his daughter to watch. Neither man nor maiden could he thoroughly make out.

Teddy, in the first place, he saw but seldom. Teddy held aloof from Griffin Street; his shadow had not once fallen on the house since that confession which he had made to Martin. They met at Stanley and Burns's now and then; but Teddy was shy of his late master—ever between them, despite all Martin's efforts to break it down, was "a distance"

that kept them at arm's-length. Teddy seemed convinced in his mind that he had lost *caste* in Martin's estimation; he had fallen in love with his master's daughter, and after that what could the master, kind and gentle as he might be, think of him? Teddy thought that he was pitied, perhaps, but he did not require pity; he knew what Martin thought of Zach, and he felt that though his own story had ended in a different fashion, the good opinion that he had striven hard to earn was forfeited. It did not matter that Martin appeared the same to him; asked him why he did not come to Griffin Street, even mentioned Christie's name, and told him that he was sure that Christie would be glad to see him—all this very kind, and like Martin Wynn, but no generosity, no forgiveness even, could move Teddy a hair's-breadth from the path he had chosen for himself. He was still as grateful, still as devoted to the Wynn cause; had trouble come to Martin he would have given up every chance in life to alleviate it; but he stood firm in his new resolution; and it was his deep humility rather than any sense of wounded pride that kept him terribly firm.

Once or twice Martin faced him with Christie herself; taking her to Upper Ground Street in the summer evenings that had come now. Teddy was always found at home, reading to the old watchman and Polly, or relating an incident of the day with a quaintness of description characteristic of Teddy at his best, but Christie's coming was to quench him utterly. He would be confused and silent at first, answering but in uncertain monosyllables; and after a while there followed an excuse to fetch something for Polly, to go to the wharf with old Mr. Wynn, to do some work in his own room, which was imperative, and which would keep him there till Martin and Christie called good-night to him before they went away.

And Christie? Well, Christie was a perplexity also to Martin Wynn. She was more thoughtful than she used to be, he fancied—could he have seen her when he was at work himself in that front parlor, or when he was away from home, he would have "*fancied*" no longer; but she maintained that she was happy enough, and even to talk of Teddy and his eccentricities was not to embarrass her in any way. She had given up Mr. Ubbs for good, he knew; there had ensued between the ill-fated suitor and Christie a long

explanation of their unsuitability for each other, of the daughter's objection to be married, and her desire to remain forever and ever with her father; and though Mr. Ubbs believed that it would all come right in time, he called no more at Griffin Street. Still Christie was a perplexity to her father; Martin was not quite certain that she did not miss Teddy too much, or did not brood too deeply in his absence concerning the motives that kept Teddy away—and though he knew that her pride, or self-dependence, or "faith," or whatever it might be called, would keep her very strong, still he was sorry to think that an age when she should be most bright, there was a something between her and the sun.

Martin was thinking of Christie and Teddy after his old fashion, over his work—wondering what would have happened had Teddy held fast to the old place, and whether it were for the best, or the worst, that he had gone—whether Christie was not too good for Teddy, and Teddy was not right and to be commended for his studious isolation, when two chestnut horses and a yellow-bodied carriage, that he recognized, stopped before his parlor windows.

"Why, here's that woman again!" he ejaculated, with something like dismay. "She's like ill luck coming to the house. Have I ever met her in my life without meeting trouble with her, and being bothered for six months after meeting? It's very hard that she can't keep her grievances to herself. I'm not the family adviser?"

By this time the footman had delivered a note at the door, and was waiting, said Mr. Wynn's maid, for an answer.

"Oh! it's not the lady herself, at any rate," he muttered, as he broke the seal. "It's only a message."

Opening the letter, he read as follows:—

"Wimbledon, July, 186—.

"DEAR MR. WYNN,—In altering and removing the furniture for my last ball, your cabinet, I regret to say, has become injured. Will you kindly see at once if it be necessary to have the cabinet at your house, or whether a day's work at mine will not be sufficient? My carriage is at your service.

"Yours truly,

CAROLINE HENWOOD."

Mr. Wynn folded the note, and sighed.

"I knew that I couldn't escape her long," he said. "I wonder what the clumsy rascals have done to the cabinet?"

He went to the street door, whereat the footman was lounging—the successor to the young man who had objected to waiting about in the cold.

"Will you tell Mrs. Henwood that I'll come down in the course of the afternoon," said Martin.

The footman, who was regarding the upper floors of the houses in Griffin Street in a supercilious manner, and continued thus to regard them while addressing Martin, said—

"You're to come back with us, I understood. You'd better get in, for *she* don't like waiting for any body, I can tell you."

"I'm not going in that thing," said Martin. "I'll come down by train this afternoon."

"Oh! very well," said the footman, languidly removing himself from the doorway, "it don't matter to me, of course."

The carriage and horses, with attendant lackeys, whirled themselves away from Griffin Street, and it was not till a later hour that Martin Wynn left home for Wimbledon, reaching Mrs. Henwood's villa in due course.

"The last time I came here with Teddy, and Teddy met his brother Zach, and his first great disappointment together," murmured Martin, as he went along the drive, "somehow we lost a little sunshine here, and never got it back."

He was in the drawing-room a few minutes afterward, bowing to the great lady from whom it seemed that he should not be able to entirely free himself again. Mrs. Henwood rose and shook hands with him, as with an old friend; and Martin was, at all events, pleased with his reception—still more pleased not to detect any affectation of demeanor—"airs and graces," he termed it—in her greeting to him.

Martin was even startled at Mrs. Henwood's appearance. Not yet five-and-forty years of age—she was his own age within a day or two, he knew—it was remarkable to witness how rapidly she had aged, despite her constant war against that Time which dealt with her so mercilessly. She clung still to her pearl-powder, rouge, and ringlets—for she was a woman who cared not to look ten years older than she really was—but they became her less with every day,

and looked more out of place upon her. She could not arrest the deepening of the lines upon her cheeks and forehead, or do much to stop the darkening of that shade beneath her eyes; she had tried very hard to keep her cares away—she had been recommended by her doctor never to distress herself or her nerves, if she could help it; but of late years the troubles would come uppermost, and it became more difficult to shake them off. The artificial juvenility of bloom that day did not prevent Martin Wynn from seeing that it was the face of a miserable woman—a miserable old woman, he might have added. She was too “low” even to put on her company smile on that occasion, but looked very gravely at the man whom she had summoned to her house.

“You haven’t been ill?” was Martin’s sudden exclamation.

“Ill!—do I look ill, then, Mr. Wynn?” was her quick response to this.

For a reason better known to herself than Martin, she had tried to look her best that day, laying on her powder with an unusual degree of thickness, and manipulating with her hare’s foot and rouge, and being manipulated upon by her maid, until her maid was “fit to drop,” as she told her friends and equals at a later hour.

“You’re looking *tired* at all events,” corrected Martin—“been up the last five nights, perhaps—I believe you’re in the season.”

“I hate the season!” said Mrs. Henwood, peevishly—“I have had enough of seasons lately; they’re all alike—the same frivolity, slander, heartlessness, and pride meeting you at every turn. Very likely I look tired enough.”

“*You* tired of pleasure, Mrs. Henwood?” said Martin, with no small surprise—“that is odd news.”

“We all get odd as we grow old, I think sometimes,” replied Mrs. Henwood; “and see what an old woman I am now, Mr. Wynn!”

She laughed, and shook her ringlets with something of that past affectation, which Martin Wynn had missed, and then she paused for Martin’s protest against her self-depreciation. But she should have known Martin Wynn by this time.

“Oh! we are all getting on,” said Martin; “I suppose

we have no right to complain. On the contrary, if we grow better with our years, to rejoice."

"Have you grown better?" was the sharp answer.

"I think that I am less proud," said Martin.

"You!—why, you have impressed every body so much with *your* humility!"

"Yes. That was my pride—something like Uriah Heep's, madam."

"I never met him."

"Uriah is in one of Charles Dickens's works."

"I never read," responded Mrs. Henwood—"I haven't much time—I don't care for reading. So you have grown less proud—if I congratulate you, will you do me the same kind office? I am fond of compliments," she added, truthfully enough.

"You are less proud, then?"

"Yes. I have had a great deal to humiliate me," she said, with no small sadness in her tones; "and possibly some remnants of your Yarmouth sermons clung to me after you had gone. Twelve months ago—why, they seem twelve years."

"Not to me," was the sturdy answer.

"Ah! you have not experienced trouble, or succumbed to temptation."

"What?" exclaimed Martin.

"I have had to face trouble, and I always gave way to temptation when it was a temptation to my taste," she said, scoffingly.

"I do not exactly know whether you are in jest or earnest."

"That is the charm of my style, Mr. Wynn."

"Oh! is it?"

"See to your work, please. How much damage have my clumsy servants done to your *chef-d'œuvre*?"

Martin went to the cabinet, and inspected it. He sighed at the little care that had been taken of his work—at the only piece of work in Europe of its kind. The servants had bumped and knocked it about at divers periods, winding up by bringing the corner of a grand piano with a crash into the face of the principal goddess.

"It has been considerably damaged," said Martin; "you must have some handy young creatures about your house!"

"Creatures who never study me or my furniture," said Mrs. Henwood.

"Not the latter, at all events."

"How long will it take to restore, Mr. Wynn?"

"It depends upon my good-fortune in dropping on woods of the right color and shade. I will take this panel home."

"Can not it be done here, then?"

"Oh! no—impossible."

"I thought that you could bring your woods, and restore it as it stands."

Martin shook his head, and repeated that that plan of action was impossible.

"Very well. Take away the panel, then."

Martin had a tool or two with him in his coat-pocket, and proceeded to unscrew the hinges of the lower panel, Mrs. Henwood watching him from the ottoman on which she had dropped. She had something more to say, it was evident; there were many questions hovering on her lip that she had intended to put to Martin Wynn in the spare moments over the task with which she had furnished him—having but a faint idea of marqueterie-work, and thinking that it was all very easy, putting little pieces of wood together, and polishing them up afterward.

"Mr. Wynn," she said at last, "I did not take your advice, of which I came in search in the winter-time. It was not to the purpose, I thought, and could not result in any good."

"You were the better judge of that, doubtless," said Martin, politely; "they married, and you made Zachary a partner—it was generous on your part, and, doubtless, Mr. Zach appreciates that generosity."

"I don't know—he is a good partner, at all events."

"And a good husband, I hope?"

"Letlice says so—it would be early days to assert the contrary," she answered; "of husband and wife I do not see a great deal—I am very much alone in this great house now."

"You fill it with your friends very often, Mrs. Henwood."

"I fill it with my acquaintances," she corrected; "friendship is out of fashion—I never met with it—I don't believe in it."

"I would try another way to find my friends, then," said Martin.

"Ah! go to chapel, I suppose, and persuade a new army of hypocrites what an upright, virtuous, amiable woman I am," she cried; "no, that will not do for me."

Martin had one door of his cabinet in his hands now. It was a small door, that he tucked under his arm like a portfolio, as he looked hard at Mrs. Henwood.

"You don't want me to begin an old argument, I suppose?" asked Martin; "I can't convince you—you're so very stubborn that you put me out of temper."

Mrs. Henwood laughed at this. It was the first effort at hilarity that Martin had witnessed in her that day, and it seemed a dreary and forced effort with that new and melancholy face before him.

"I like your advice better than your arguments," she said; "though I do not pay any attention to either. Your advice is kind and well-meant—and I have not forgotten what you said in Griffin Street."

"I am afraid that I have," answered Martin.

"When I want advice in a great strait, I will come to you again, if you will allow me," she said; "for there really are sense and thought in you, and I can't find those requisites in *my* set. I am heartily sick of my set!" was the peevish exclamation here.

"I'm glad to hear it," cried Martin; "it must pall on you."

"What do you know of my class?"

"Oh! very little," Martin confessed.

He had seen in his mind's eye whole regiments of Mrs. Henwood's "set," all overflowing with envy, uncharitableness, worldliness, and self-conceit—all bent on pleasure in every way, and at every corner of life's journey—living and dying for pleasure, and bowing to the Idol Fashion, as the worshippers of old bowed to Baal—fine people, living by the square and rule—all mechanism, but no soul. He did not like to express this, for, after all, he fancied that it was unjust to take Mrs. Henwood as a sample of the whole.

"Are you going now?"

"Yes, madam."

"When do you think that that panel will be finished?" she asked, a second time; "in weeks or months, now?"

"A fortnight, perhaps."

"Write and let me know when I may expect it home. Bring it home yourself, mind—I may have news for you."

"News for me?" said Martin; "good news, I hope."

"You may be the better judge of that than I."

Martin was ready to depart. She went with him into the hall, waving imperiously away the menial lingering there; before Martin could stop her, she had even opened the door for him, in an absent manner, that surprised herself the instant afterward.

"You perceive what a deal of pride I have lost," she said, with a faint smile, "or how eccentric I am becoming. Good-day."

"Good-day," said Martin.

"One moment," she said quickly; "I thought that I had something more to say. His brother—how is he getting on?"

"Brother?—Zach's brother, you mean?"

Mrs. Henwood nodded.

"Very well, no doubt. He is steady, clever, and persevering—he has no expensive tastes, and he keeps good hours, I believe."

"He has left you, then?"

"Yes."

"You found him out?" she said, eagerly; "he deceived you and proved himself a schemer—just as I prophesied. He is a man whom nobody can trust—say that, please?"

"Why, I have just said the contrary," replied Martin, very much surprised.

"You don't know how glad I would be to hear that he was not deserving of any support—any one's confidence—that, in fact, he was more like his father than my partner. That—"

"Stop, please, Mrs. Henwood," cried Martin; "this is an awful expression of ill will against one who has never done you any harm. Why, you haven't improved in the least, after all!"

"I don't like the Fernwells, you know that," she replied; "and if that son were deserving of misfortune like his father, it would be so much better for me, perhaps—I think it would—but then I am a fool of a woman! Half mad at times, and not conscious of what I am talking about. Good-day, again."

"Decidedly half mad," thought Martin, as he went homeward; "for what good to her could ensue from Teddy's downfall? Yes, half mad, poor woman!—I knew that long ago, and to think that she has only just found it out herself!"

CHAPTER III.

MAD ALTOGETHER.

AFTER due notice given as required, Martin Wynn took home the renovated panel of his cabinet. The woman who was half mad did not receive him in the drawing-room, as on the previous occasion; on the contrary, an apology for Mrs. Henwood's non-appearance was tendered to him by the servant.

"Mrs. Henwood's daughter has called, sir, and Mrs. Henwood will see you when she has gone."

"I don't know that it is of any consequence," said Martin.

"You're to wait, please," added the servant. "Mrs. Henwood has left orders that you are not to leave until she has seen you."

"Very kind of Mrs. Henwood to give her orders," said Martin dryly; "I'll think them over, young man."

Martin went to his cabinet and commenced the little work that there was before him. He was still at the cabinet when a young lady in a stiff silk rustled into the room, and pronounced his name.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Wynn," she said. "I thought that it was scarcely fair, for old acquaintance' sake, to leave the house without asking after your daughter's health."

She spoke hurriedly, making no approach to friendliness by offering him her hand; she spoke even abruptly in her haste, as Martin rose from his knees to address her.

"My daughter is very well, thank you, Mrs. Fernwell," said Martin.

"Mrs. Henwood is my name. My husband changed his, at my mother's request, long ago. I don't like the name of Fernwell."

"I question whether any body has a right to change his name," said Martin; "I can't see what harm a name can do a person. It's childish rather."

"We have no cause to cling gratefully to the name of Fernwell," she said; "we Henwoods were glad to get rid of it altogether. My husband's brother has not changed his name, I presume?"

Again this sudden interest in Teddy—Martin could not understand it. The mother during her last visit—and now the daughter.

"No—he is doing his best to make the name a good one," answered Martin, "and I'm pleased to see there is no longer an interdict upon it in this house. I think that *he* will be pleased."

"He is getting on in the world, then?"

"Slowly—but surely, Mrs. Henwood."

Lettice looked down at the carpet, and fidgeted with her parasol; Martin had time to survey her before she spoke again. She had not improved in her looks since her marriage; it seemed more than a year since their last meeting. There was a heaviness of brow that Martin did not remember to have noticed before—and yet the forehead could not have jutted forward like a land-slip, and cast the large eyes more completely into shadow?

Still, the face was more heavy, he thought—as it was certainly more pale, and about the chin and jaw more angular. Possibly, thought Martin, she had been keeping late hours, like her mother—seeing the old season out, like the new year, before she left for the sea-side again. It must be hard work to keep up with the season, or people would never look so miserable toward its termination, was Martin's final thought before he took his eyes from their one object of interest.

"Is he any thing like his brother?" she asked suddenly.

"Teddy?—oh! no—Teddy is tall, and not so good-looking, although it's a better face, so far as its expression goes—at least, in my opinion," he corrected, out of regard for the feelings of his listener.

"I did not mean in looks," she said, "but in manners, disposition, character. You know them both?"

"Very little of your husband—a great deal of your brother-in-law."

"Don't call him that, please," was the quick reply; "he is not a brother-in-law of mine—I wouldn't see him for the world!"

"May I ask why this interest in him, then?" said Martin.

"I am not interested, that I am aware."

"Sometimes I wish that you and your husband were," said Martin; "now there is no secret to keep, I can not understand the rich brother holding aloof from the poor one. Has Zachary spoken of him lately?"

"No."

"Why, then—oh! perhaps Mrs. Henwood has?"

"My mother!" exclaimed Lettice; "she is not very likely to mention his name."

"Whose name?" asked Mrs. Henwood, entering at this moment.

"Mr. Richard Fernwell's eldest son's," said Lettice, facing her mother as she replied.

Mrs. Henwood shrank a little; and then, after an acknowledgment of Martin Wynn's presence by a bow, she said quickly—

"I never speak, or think of him. What is he to me?"

"Pardon me," said Martin, "but the last time that I was here you mentioned his name."

"Casually, perhaps. I forget."

"Oh! I doubt that," was Martin's blunt assertion; "you have a good memory, Mrs. Henwood, and it is not likely to betray you so readily. And really, I don't see that there is any thing to be ashamed of, or to be afraid of in him, that should make you backward in acknowledging an interest in the most unselfish fellow whom I have ever met."

Mother and daughter did not answer at once, and there ensued a pause of considerable length. The daughter was the first to speak, with some of that past excitability to which Martin had been a witness at the Yarmouth railway station.

"You speak up for your friend—we know nothing of him, and therefore say nothing against him. I, for one, will not shun him when we meet, if he be all that you describe. But—but I thought that he was like his father!"

"No," said Martin.

"And your daughter Christie?" she said, dashing toward another topic; "well, you say? Not married yet?"

"Oh, no!"

"Engaged?"

"No—not engaged."

"A pretty face like hers should have won many suitors to her side, by this time. I am writing a book now, with a Christie for my heroine. Mr. Wynn, will you tell her that?"

Mr. Wynn promised to break that startling piece of information to her.

"My husband being a great deal from home, I can not weary him by resuming an old habit," said Lettice; "in a false world—a world of one's own creation—it is more easy to forget the troubles of the real one."

"No troubles have fallen to your share, surely?" said the mother bitterly—"you who married for love, too?"

"Well, the man I married brings no trouble to me," answered Lettice; "so Mr. Wynn will not take that impression home with him. Will he take home a message to his daughter instead?"

"Certainly," said Martin.

"Tell Christie that I shall surprise her shortly with a visit. I owe her a scolding for not stopping at Yarmouth when I wanted her. I will swoop down upon her like a hawk yet, Mr. Wynn, and carry this pet lamb of yours away."

"I hope not."

"Beware of me—I am almost as eccentric as my mother."

She went away after this, and Mrs. Henwood followed her. Presently the outer door closed, and Mrs. Henwood re-entered.

"Quite as eccentric—don't you think so, Mr. Wynn?" she asked.

"Upon my honor," said Martin frankly, "you put the oddest questions to me."

"What do you think of her now?—you have seen her before," she said.

"She's like a girl with something on her mind," said Martin; "perhaps it's the story she's writing, though."

"You wouldn't say—judging by her looks—that she was happy now?"

"Well, judging by her looks—no."

"Yet, there is a young woman who has had her own way in every thing—to whom we have all yielded our prejudices, and succumbed—who has had every wish of her life gratified."

"A lucky woman—I hope that she is grateful, if not happy."

"Sometimes I fancy that she is a better daughter to me now, deficient as she may be in respect; for there is no more gratitude in her disposition, than there is any real happiness in her life. A poor woman doomed, I verily believe, to be always discontented."

"It is very strange!"

"It is very natural," said Mrs. Henwood—"natural now, with the selfish husband of whom I warned her. Perhaps it was natural before—long ago—for I can scarcely consider that her mother has been a contented woman. A woman mild and gentle enough, and easily imposed upon, God knows—but not exactly contented."

Martin imagined not, but he turned toward the cabinet to repress a smile. He would not be led into any farther discussion; he was anxious to complete his work and be gone. There was a pressure of work at Griffin Street, and here at Wimbledon was every thing to distract him, and set him thinking about other people's affairs.

"How long will you be fitting that panel in?" she asked.

"A very little while now," said Martin.

"What am I to pay you for it?—I will write you a check while you are working."

She crossed to a fancy writing-table, and took a seat before it. Martin left off his work to place a small bill before her. This was more like business and dispatch, he thought. He should reach home earlier than he anticipated.

"Too small a sum, Mr. Wynn," said Mrs. Henwood; "you are very modest in your charges."

"I have charged you at the highest rate, Mrs. Henwood."

"I am in a generous mood to-day—I shall double it."

"I do not require more than my full price," said Martin; "and I can not think of taking it."

"Why, I thought that you had become less proud—you told me so," said Mrs. Henwood, looking over her shoulder at him.

"Not so humble as all that," replied Martin.

"I am in a liberal mood—don't balk it."

"More than half mad," thought Martin; but he answered,

"Well, madam, if you wish to get rid of your money, you may favor me by making out two checks, each for the amount mentioned in that bill."

"One for you, and one for some nasty refuge or other, I suppose?"

"No—one for Martin, and one for Charles Wynn."

"Charles Wynn! Why, whoever is he?"

"Ah! yes, you have a bad memory," said Martin; "I apologize."

"Charles Wynn is your father," she said. "See, my memory is good enough. But—he—he is not at my wharf now?"

"Yes, madam, serving you his hardest, and with all his heart and strength—firmly believing that you are grateful for his service. Now, that old gentleman, who would not take a penny from me to keep him from the workhouse, would be very much delighted, very much flattered by some little appreciation of his long fealty to your house."

"Do you think so?" she said. "And it would please you?"

"Yes. But it would have pleased me more, if you had not forgotten him."

"I will make reparation," she said. "The Henwoods are not as faithful as the Wynns. I wish they were—I wish they had been!"

She sighed over her check-book. Martin went on with his panel-fitting, wondering whenever he should see Mrs. Henwood in the same mood twice, and what she had done with all her old vanity, which was wearing out, perhaps, with her riper years. Certainly she had improved, or else she was going mad by degrees. Still a pleasant method with her madness—he could put up with this last phase of it.

"I will send the check to your father—with a letter."

"Thank you. Don't mention my name, on any account, or the check will come back, poor as he is!"

"I think that I can do things gracefully, if I try," said Mrs. Henwood, with a little of the vanity peeping out from under the cloak of her new amiability.

"A few men can—and all women!" answered Martin.

"Courteously spoken, Mr. Wynn," said Mrs. Henwood. "Now make haste over that cabinet, for I have a deal to say to you."

He should not get home soon, after all! What a woman this was, to be sure!

"I have not any news for you—that is, I am afraid not," she corrected. "I'll think presently. But I want your advice again."

"My advice?" said Martin.

"I said last winter that I could not depend upon myself—or you saw that I could not, at all events—and I confessed that I had no one in whom I could trust but you. Ever a riddle to me it has been why I am drawn toward a man like you—but the solution dawns upon me at last. You are the only honest, unselfish man that I have ever known."

"Not unselfish, madam—quite the contrary. Honest, I believe."

"If you had taken my check for double the money, I should not have asked your advice, but have let you go away. I have been trying you, Martin Wynn."

"You suspected my honesty, then?"

"No—but still I thought that I would test you. Are you offended?"

"No. It does not matter," said Martin.

"Tell me when you have finished there."

"Well, I never shall finish while you are here, I'm afraid," Martin replied; "there's no getting on. You bewilder me with so many questions and surprises."

"I will come back in half an hour."

"Ten minutes will do."

"In ten minutes, then."

At the expiration of that period, Martin had completed his work on the cabinet, and was awaiting Mrs. Henwood's return. She was behind time somewhat, and Martin, who valued time, was becoming restless, when she condescended, at last, to enter an appearance.

Martin noticed that as she advanced she was looking paler beneath her false colors, and there certainly was a want of firmness in her step.

She went to her desk and took up the check that she had written out some minutes since.

"Put that away," she said, "and then we can talk."

Martin complied with her request, and then went to the desk himself, signed and stamped his bill in a business-like manner, and much to Mrs. Henwood's annoyance.

"When you *have* finished," she reminded him, with a tinge of her past acerbity.

"I am ready now."

She sat down on the couch before the empty steel fireplace, and motioned Martin Wynn to a seat beside her. Martin would have preferred a more respectful distance—he was a little frightened of her that day—but he took the seat indicated nevertheless, thinking it was a strange position for a lady of wealth and a marqueterie-worker.

"I—I think that I will take your advice this time, for you are a shrewd and clear-headed man, and I have learned to have faith in you. What shall I do with all my money?"

Martin was amazed at the question.

"Upon my word, I can not advise you concerning the disposal of your money. You mean by will?"

"Yes."

"You must decide that weighty matter, Mrs. Henwood," said he. "You know best what claims your relatives have upon you—what friends you possess."

"Mr. Wynn, my relatives—my daughter, that is—is provided for. Her husband has one half of the business—the whole will be his at my death. I do not care to lavish farther wealth in that direction—I can not leave it to a man who must become rich, and I have money on my hands."

"Poor woman!" said Martin, dryly.

"Don't satirize me—but advise," she said, vehemently.

"I would think of my friends."

"I have not any," she said, with growing excitement; "in all my circle—and it is an immense circle, embracing hundreds of fine people—there is not one I care for. There is not one, Martin Wynn, who will shed a tear at my death, or put mourning on for me after I am gone. I can not—think—of one!"

"You have not given yourself much time for thought," said Martin; "this is a matter not to be decided upon in a moment of rash excitement—and you are excited."

"Am I?" she said, with a faint smile, and trying to assume a calmer demeanor on the instant; "that is a fancy of yours—I am very cool and collected."

"You will pardon me for paining you again with allusion to a subject that is objectionable," said Martin, "but you have poor relations on your sister's side."

"Don't speak of them! Would you have me leave money to Fernwell the convict?"

"Well—no. But to Fernwell's son—the man who is honest—the man of whom I have spoken to you."

"I can't bear to hear his name," she said, shuddering; "I will not think of him. He is rising slowly in the world, you say, and he *is* honest. My money would only make him wretched—launch him into a new life, that would bring forth all the evil qualities—the Fernwell blood—sleeping in him now. I will not be his temptress."

"There are ways—"

"I will not leave him a penny!" she exclaimed; "I will not listen to such advice as that."

"Very well," said Martin; "we will dismiss the subject, and you may think of Teddy Fernwell another time, perhaps. I would not wholly forget him in my will, for the sake of the dead sister, madam."

"Would you advise me to leave money to hospitals?—to charities?"

"You might do worse than think of the suffering and the poor. Nay, you should think a little of them now, and help them now—meeting with your reward even on earth, in the joy and gratitude that would follow your beneficence."

"I haven't the courage to face affliction—and I don't like ragged people. No," with a sigh, "I can't play Lady Bountiful. I may think of some institutions in my will—not before."

"I am at the end of my advice, Mrs. Henwood," said Martin; "I feel that I am in a false position already."

"You have no advice to offer a woman who is entirely alone in the world?—who is tired, heartily tired, Martin Wynn, of that world, seeing truly enough at last how false and hollow it is?—I have striven all my life for a place in it, and having gained it—I collapse!"

She struck her hand upon the scroll end of her couch with a violence that must have hurt her.

"I told you long ago that such a world as yours was not worth all the study that you made of it, madam. To hear you rail against its vanities is to assure me that you are a better and less heartless woman."

"God forgive me!—I am a wicked woman!" she cried; "growing more wicked, for the want of one true heart and one stout arm to help me on the better way. I would give up all to be happy for the remainder of my life—I would even become poor!"

"So great a sacrifice is surely not demanded."

"Why don't you advise me to marry again?" she said, hoarsely; "I am not an old woman—I may live many years—I ought to study myself a little, now no one studies me. Why should I live in this great house alone, listening to the sneers of the men and women who take my wages?—set aside by a daughter who despises me, and a son-in-law who hates me—summoning sometimes a crowd here to dispel my melancholy, knowing all the while that every one who seeks me has his jest at my infirmities. I will not live this life any longer. I have changed!"

"Marry, you say? But with no friends to choose from, Mrs. Henwood—with no faith in your set, I would advise you, very earnestly this time, to remain single."

"I am a proud woman—but I would sink my pride for one scrap of true affection. I am a rich woman, but I would give all my money to him who would teach me by his nobleness, his truthfulness, to love him as he deserved—I would exult even in the ridicule of the fine people with whom I should lose *caste*, and I should shake them all away from me and—be glad. Will you advise me now?"

"I can not advise you farther, Mrs. Henwood."

"Will you—you, Martin Wynn, protect me?" she gasped forth.

"Protect you!—madam!"

"Against myself—against the world—I am very weak! I ask you to take me from my high estate; I sink all my pride, my womanly reserve, knowing that you can never speak. Make me your wife!"

"Mrs. Henwood—you—you—are—not yourself to-day," said Martin, rising.

"Don't leave me yet!" she cried, clutching his arm; "advise me what to do. I am alone in the world—I love you!"

CHAPTER IV.

MARTIN'S ANSWER.

"I LOVE you!"

A strange confession for a proud woman to make to a man; stranger still for Mrs. Henwood to make to Martin

Wynn. Even yet Martin could scarcely believe in the reality of the present hour. He must have gone to sleep over his marqueterie-work in that front room in Griffin Street, and Christie entering presently would rouse him from his nap, and laugh with him at the oddity of his dream.

And yet—it must be reality, he thought, when he had recovered his breath, and was sitting once more on the couch to which Mrs. Henwood's clutch upon his arm had reduced him. He could follow the thread of that afternoon's incidents too closely, from the first start by railway till that moment; and there was too much evidence of reality in the flushed face and fierce eyes of the lady at his side.

"No—no—I hope not, Mrs. Henwood," he said.

"Why do you say that?" she exclaimed passionately; "for my sake or yours? Are you ready to fling me back upon myself—you the only man in whom I can trust? Will you stand aloof and shame me utterly?"

"I will only ask you, in a less excited moment, to think how foolish all this is—how poor a jest to try my firmness—how pitiable it makes me and you."

"I am in no mood for jesting—I lo—"

"Don't say it again," said Martin very quickly, and yet with a gentleness that arrested her at once. "A woman had better die than own such words, unasked, to a man—even a woman alone in her splendor, and twice as friendless as you tell me that you are. Spare yourself, madam, needless humiliation, or you will look back upon this day with lasting regret."

"It is a day to be remembered; for I have spoken the truth in it," she said bitterly; "and I face a truth that is sterner—do I not? You are not a man to prevaricate, and—you will answer me?"

"Answer—what?"

"That you do not love me—can never love me. Tell me so at once, and end my folly, sir."

She turned her head away from him, and looked down at the carpet, bending her face very low to hide such bitter burning tears as can only escape women cast down by their own rash acts. Martin was moved, but he responded to her answer, as she had wished it.

"I am sorry—but it is impossible that I can ever make you my wife," he said.

"I can not tempt you with my riches," she answered; "you would not marry for them, at least—and you do not like me for myself. I have seen it, oh! so long ago!"

"Pardon me—but I have felt very much for your peculiar position, and have even sorrowed with you, at a distance. Our lives have crossed and recrossed in too singular a manner, and been too constantly affected by the same plots and people around us, for me to be devoid of interest in you. You will do me the justice to believe this—and I will ask you to do yourself the justice to remember that you are a lady born, and I am of a class beneath you. There, dry your eyes, and think no more about it—it's not worth a second thought."

"Not of yours," she said facing him again; "you always cold and equable and hard, can afford to reason thus—but I am a baffled woman. You don't know how I have struggled not to love you—how for eight years, now, the woman's pride or the woman's vanity of place, has kept me at arm's-length, trying to believe that it was impossible to think of you. I was a fool—granted, Martin Wynn—but oh! I should have been a happy one with you. I know that now—I see that now."

"I think that you would have been unhappy," said he; "for this is romance, and I belong to every-day life."

"You were different to all the world that I had met," she continued taking no heed of his protest; "you changed me despite myself; you were ever before me; you were earnest, truthful, and manly, and I had encountered nothing but deceit, and love of gain, and liars. I found out your true character, long since—I watched for it—I set others to watch—and in all actions of your life, I found such nobleness that had you been a beggar in the streets, I should have loved you, Martin."

"Come—come, this makes me blush worse than ever," said Martin, trying hard to assume a lighter tone. "I can't sit here, and listen to this nonsense about my nobleness and manliness, and so forth. I have tried to do my duty in life as well as I could, and I have kept my hands out of other people's pockets. There are thousands like me."

"No—no!"

"There are hundreds of thousands better than I in the world, or this would be a poor England; there are hundreds

of thousands nearer your own class from whom to choose a husband, Mrs. Henwood."

"I have no friends, sir," she said humbly; "I am entirely alone in the world—dependent on my own weak judgment."

"Weak judgment—yes—or you would never have surprised me by this rash avowal."

"Rash, and I have been finding courage to tell you for years. Well," she said, looking at him again, "I have told you—I am glad of that. It takes a weight from me—even the shame that it causes me now can not lie so heavy as my secret. Oh, Martin!" she cried more impetuously, "I would have been so proud of you—I would have made others—even of my own class—so proud of you too. And you cast me off!"

"No—I cast you not from me—I but save you from the misery of an ill-assorted union."

"Have you—have you *any* intention of marrying again, Mr. Wynn?" she asked—"is there any body—any where?"

"Forty-five next birthday, both of us, and talking of love, and marriage, and 'intentions,' like two young fools of one-and-twenty!" said Martin—"hang it! let us have a hearty laugh at this, and say good-afternoon."

"Why don't you answer my question?" she said, fretfully.

"Is there any body—any where?" repeated Martin—"any body of whom I think tenderly—any where? Yes, I hope there is—in heaven."

"Ha!" said Mrs. Henwood, "you are true to *her*, now?"

"Christie's mother, you mean?" said Martin, with a touching earnestness of tone—"well, yes. I never loved another woman before I met her, and all the great love I had for her went down into the grave along with her coffin. I have never thought of marrying again—I have never wished in all this after life to call another woman my wife. I say not a word," he added, "against second marriages, and those who make them, and are happy in them—only they are of a different stuff to me, somehow—that's all."

"Less true—less large-hearted," said Mrs. Henwood, drying her tears with a hasty hand—"like myself more, Mr. Wynn. But then I never loved my husband; he was a relative, and forced upon me for his wealth, and he brought another curse or two to keep my soul down, instead of a

blessing, with my marriage. There, forgive me, and say nothing about the grand offer that I have made you," she said, with a sickly smile—"it's all past, and gone."

"I hope so."

"I shall never be able to look you in the face, I think," she said, nervously; "but if I find the courage, don't turn away, or be afraid of my making love to you ever again; give me your moral support, if I need it—teach me, if I ask you, to become a less guilty wretch than I am."

"Hard names, which I don't like to hear, Mrs. Henwood."

"I am guilty—very guilty," she repeated, mournfully; "you would have turned from me with a greater loathing if you could have known all the baseness and sordidness of my disposition. If I could tell you all—if I dared!"

"Tell me nothing more," said Martin, fearful of fresh embarrassments, and anxious to escape them, "or tell me on another occasion, when both of us are calmer. You are looking at life through a distorting glass, and every little weakness is magnifying itself to the proportions of a great sin. You will see clearly to-morrow. Courage, Mrs. Henwood—you are not old or weak yet, and the best days may be advancing."

"Go now," she murmured.

He extended his hand toward her.

"You have done me a great honor," he said, "and I consider it a higher honor than I ever in life expected to receive. I must not go away without thanking you for this—I am not ungrateful, I hope, for the high opinion of me which you have expressed, and which, if I don't fight hard against, will make me vainer from to-day. I thank you, Mrs. Henwood, for your confidence, your—your esteem, and I am sure that you will be glad presently that I have acted with fairness, saving you from an illusion. Good-by."

"God bless you!" she ejaculated, seizing his hand in both her own; "forgive me—and good-by."

In her excitement, her want of self-restraint, she would have pressed her lips upon his hand, if he had let her. But he gently held her back with his other hand, and then, murmuring, "Spare me—spare yourself," went out of the room.

When he had gone—when the door had closed—Mrs. Henwood slid from the couch to the ground, and gave way altogether. She was alone in the world, and could indulge

herself in this luxury of grief; there was no one in that house whose place it was to comfort her, or offer one kind word.

CHAPTER V.

GOOD AND BAD NEWS.

MRS. HENWOOD did not send to her old servant, Charles Wynn, the check for the same amount that she had tendered Martin; in the impulse of the better moments, of the feelings that, in her love-storm, had surged uppermost, she forwarded a check for a larger amount, inclosing with it a few lines that astonished herself as well as the recipient. She was a woman who *had* changed; she was right in that verdict. Charles Wynn received the letter early in the evening; Teddy, coming home from work, met the postman at the door, and brought the letter up stairs in his hand.

"Here, sir," he said, laughing as he entered the room, "the ladies are looking you up again. This is a lady's letter, I'm sure, by the scrawl."

Teddy seemed in good spirits that evening; he had a duty to perform, he thought, in keeping the hearts light of these two Wynns, and if he were less cheerful at times, it was only when he had himself for company. He believed that he was serving Martin Wynn faithfully yet, when he was doing his best to play the son and brother in that house, and his efforts did him a fair amount of good. He was unaware of the fact that he possessed a large share of true philosophy; he faced the worst, and made up his mind to endure it patiently, and as best he might; not for an instant had it struck him that it was necessary to bemoan his fate, or give way. He was content, he thought; sorry for the cause that had separated him from the one man of whom he made a hero, but believing that it was all for the best, and resigned to the changes which had come to him. So he would do his best still, scared a little now and then by that prison shadow which *would* oppress him, but pushing forward by degrees, and having at his heart one ambition, of which the Wynns were wholly ignorant. It was an ambition that belonged to the future—a far-away future, when

Christie Wynn was married, and Martin was an old man, when he could go to Griffin Street, and be his master's friend again. Then that ambition might be gratified, and he and Martin together might work out the scheme he had in view, and for which he was already saving hard—a scheme to help the poor, and weak, and sinful.

So Teddy Fernwell, set apart from those he loved best, unacknowledged by a brother rising in the world, pursued his quiet way, none the worse for his change, but bearing up manfully against his little misfortunes, and striving to present a cheerful countenance to those with whom his every-day life brought him in contact. He was not quite so embarrassed now to meet Martin, and he could even face Christie without a blush and a stammer, though he lingered not longer in her company than he could help.

He came into the room that summer evening with Mrs. Henwood's letter in his hand, astonishing the old gentleman by his vigor, and changing the old place on the instant into something brighter.

"A lady's letter for me!" said Mr. Wynn, startled as usual out of his nap in a corner of his capacious chair, "get out with you!"

"It's Christie's handwriting, perhaps," suggested Polly, very busy with her dressmaking.

"No, it isn't," said Teddy, decisively. "Christie doesn't turn out such a spider's scrawl as this, or shake the ink all of a lump into the last word."

"Then it's a mistake," said Mr. Wynn, "unless—"

He paused to take a deep breath; the brightness of his new idea was a little too much for him.

"Unless it's from Mrs. Henwood," continued this lucid old gentleman. "It isn't very likely, but she might think, one of these fine days, of my length of service, and—and thank me for it."

"Oh! never mind Mrs. Henwood," said Teddy, cheerfully. "Perhaps she never thinks—or never learned to write, sir."

"Or has got too much to think about, for an old fellow like me to come across her mind," concluded the old man; "but still, if I had been—"

"Dear, dear, why don't you open the letter, father!" cried Polly, full of nervous excitement, and pricking her finger at every alternate stitch.

"No—let us guess," said Teddy; "let us spin out the sensation—it isn't often we get such a brush-up to our faculties. Now, you say, dad, it's from Mrs. Henwood?"

"No, I say it's bad news," corrected Mr. Wynn. "We've been much too comfortable for a long while, with you laughing about here, and making us laugh and feel younger. We're going to have a stop put to that. If this is from Mrs. Henwood, she has given me notice to leave next Saturday."

"Oh! you haven't had your nap out," cried Teddy. "I say it's good news—unless it's the income-tax coming down upon you for arrears. And Miss Polly says it's good news too—don't you?"

"To be sure I do," said Polly. "Why, who's going to take the trouble to send him bad news at his age? And if it is the notice to quit," Polly had evidently been impressed by her father's lugubrious prophecy, though she was bearing up against it as well as she could, "why, that's good news, for we shall have more of you at home, and less rheumatics."

Mr. Wynn had polished his spectacles, and put them on by this time; even the ancient terrier woke up suddenly, and looked at his master. The letter was opened, and the check fluttered out and fell to the floor.

"Oh!—it's one of Martin's games," said Mr. Wynn, as Teddy stooped and picked it up; "he's sending money here again, and I thought that I'd stopped that nonsense long ago. No—it's—IT IS! It's come at last!—didn't I say it would? Now, God bless her, to think that she thanks me, and sees what a help I've been to the place!—and, oh! dear—how much does she say? Here, Teddy, this can't be a one and two noughts—it ain't possible!"

Teddy opened the check, and announced that the bearer was to be paid one hundred pounds. Teddy took the letter from the old man's hands, and read Mrs. Henwood's thanks for Mr. Wynn's life-long service, and the expression of her hope that Mr. Wynn would accept the inclosed check for a hundred pounds, as an earnest of her gratitude.

Mr. Wynn shed tears, laughed, crowed with delight, rose and walked up and down the room, shaking hands with his daughter and Teddy—even, in a sudden fit of importance, almost got his back straight.

"I knew she wasn't the woman to forget any body. And this is money which I can take—gratefully, of course—but

which I've earned to them, I hope, in one way or t'other. I knew the Henwoods were a good sort—every one of them! Careful of their money, perhaps, and making quite sure that it was spent on worthy objects—taking their time to make sure, as is proper enough. A hundred pounds!”

“What shall we do with it?” said Polly. “Good gracious!—what bank’s safe, I wonder, to put such a lot in, all at once!”

“I think that I shall invest in Indian stocks, or reduced counsels,” said Mr. Wynn with much gravity. “Where have you got *your* money, Teddy?—and do you have your interest reg’lar?”

“I’m in the counsels, sir—it’s handy to draw out.”

This was not answered ironically, though Teddy knew better. Teddy would not have said consols for the world, after Mr. Wynn, lest he should have hurt the old man’s feelings.

“Polly shall write to Martin to-night, or go over herself and break the news,” said the old man. “You’d better start at once, and Teddy shall take care of you and the check. Give Martin the check, and ask him to buy a lot of the counsels as cheap as he can for us. And to-morrow we’ll pay our personal respects to Mrs. Henwood, and thank her very much.”

“And after that,” said Polly, “we’ll think about retiring from business—eh, father? This may be a hint that you are too old to stand the hard winter—and is offered as a pension.”

“I hope not. That would hurt me very much,” said Mr. Wynn, “for I was thinking that I should like to serve her ever so long yet—to die in harness, to show that I never flinched right up to the end. Yes—I should like to die in harness! When I ain’t *really* of use I can give up, Polly, but I can’t see the man to mind that wharf like me. Don’t frighten me with such awful thoughts as those, miss.”

“Oh! I am so sorry!” cried Polly, embracing her father on the spot; “it was only a fancy, for Mrs. Henwood does not say a word about your leaving.”

“I should think not, indeed!”

“It’s just likely that that little Zach of ours has talked it over with the mistress,” said Mr. Wynn, thoughtfully; “for he don’t forget us, I know. Why, didn’t he come when he

was a gentleman to see Polly—and then me? How strange it comes round, now, if Zach's in this!"

"Very strange," said Teddy, ruefully; "I wish he were."

"I don't—though I respect Zach, of course," said Mr. Wynn; "I'd prefer it came from her direct—that's how it ought to be. Well, it's very lucky to come in time—it'll leave you comf'rble, Polly, whenever it pleases the Lord to take me off night duty—it'll be always a help to you. I don't think I ever was so happy in my life—so free like!"

He put on his coat and prepared to depart. Polly equipped herself for walking; the responsibility of this large sum of money was evidently too much for her.

"You'll go with her, Teddy, to Martin's," said the watchman; "she ain't careful of the crossings, and p'raps you'd better take care of the money. She's like a baby when she's flustered."

"I'll see her to the house, sir," said Teddy, evasively.

"I dare say Martin will come back with you and congratulate me—I should like him, if he had the time. He knows where to find *me* always after eight."

They went out together, parting at the street door, and going their separate ways—the proud old gentleman to his duties, his daughter and Teddy to Griffin Street. Before they were out of hearing he called to them, and they returned.

"Who's got the money?"

"I have," said Polly, "tucked down tight enough, you may be sure. I'm not going to lose our fortune."

"See she don't drop it going along, there's a good boy," he said to Teddy, laughing the instant afterward at his remark, and adding, "a big boy, certainly, and a boy always to me that has been very good and kind. God bless you, Teddy!"

Teddy bowed his head, and accepted the benediction gratefully and reverently. The old man turned to Polly.

"And I nearly forgot to say, 'God bless you,' child. And I've said it every night before I went to business punctually—always said it, and to nearly forget it like this! Ah! my good luck has turned my head a little."

"But we're all coming back," said Polly, "Martin and Christie and all—I'm sure they'll both come to wish you joy with Mrs. Henwood's gift."

"It's not business—but I shall be glad to see them, just for once, in business hours. Take care of that girl, Teddy—she's worth her weight in gold to-night."

And with this weak little joke, Mr. Wynn, with Speck at his heels, turned back upon his way.

Teddy and Polly, arm in arm together; Polly proud of her escort—so stalwart, young, and strong an escort, too—reached Griffin Street without losing the hundred pounds. At the door of Martin Wynn's house, Teddy dropped the hand upon his arm.

"You'll come in to-night?"

Teddy shook his head.

"I would rather not," he said.

"They will be glad to see you," said Polly; "it's no good going on in this foolish way—you're not afraid of them?"

"No—not now; but I have made a promise to myself."

"Not to go in here—never!"

"Not till she's married, at all events," said Teddy, forcing a laugh; "there—you don't want me to wait?"

"Yes, I do. Why, Martin and Christie may be at chapel—and you'll have to take care of me and the money all the way back again."

"Very well—I'll wait."

Teddy took up his position with his back to the lamp-post, after Polly had been admitted into the house. He had promised to wait, and although he wished that he had reminded Polly that if she appeared not within five minutes, he should leave her to her brother's escort home, yet having made his promise, he did not think of breaking it, on account of future embarrassments rising with the night. He waited there, and thought of Mrs. Henwood and of her last act of gratitude. He was as grateful for that, as though he had been one of the Wynn family, or Mrs. Henwood had thought of him in a way that was appropriate. He stood there an hour—meeting in that hour one or two Griffin Street folk, who knew him and had liked him, as he had always been liked, lucky fellow, in every estate through which he had passed. Good and bad people, saints and sinners, had all taken to Teddy, and seen something to admire in him; and on that evening he was compelled to encounter a few questions, as to where he had been "all that long time,

and why he had left Martin Wynn's, and what he was doing, and whether he was doing well?" as all his questioners wished he really was. Finally, the door opened, and Martin, Polly, and Christie emerged into Griffin Street—as he had expected and prepared for.

"Glad to see you, Teddy," said Martin, shaking hands with him; "though you might have come in with Polly, and not have frightened any body. Why, there's nothing inside to hurt you!"

Martin intended this for a jest, to set Teddy at his ease; but it had the contrary effect, as he might have anticipated, had he been as thoughtful as his wont. Teddy stammered, looked confused, and even annoyed; he was not a man to jest, or to understand a jest, on a matter that was ever solemn to him. Christie came to the rescue, and hoped that he was well, looking shyly toward the man whose story she knew by heart now, and whom she loved the better for it.

Polly Wynn was a woman—therefore a match-maker. She had a high opinion of Teddy too—for she had had many opportunities of seeing him at his best. She had almost a higher opinion of Teddy than of his brother Zach, or her own brother Martin.

"Now, Martin, I've a great deal to tell you," she said, hooking herself on adroitly to his arm; "family matters, with which these young things have nothing to do. Teddy, where's your politeness this evening? See to Christie, and don't leave her staring there like a great goose."

"Oh!—yes—certainly."

Teddy looked wistfully into Martin's face, which betrayed nothing that evening except the good temper of its possessor—stammered, blushed, and finally offered his arm in a very awkward manner to Christie. He had not prepared for this, and he was taken off his guard. It was running counter to all his sternest resolutions, of which they might have caught a glimpse, but would never give him credit for in their entirety. No one in the world except himself understood his peculiar firmness, he thought. Far ahead of him the dull road, the even track that he could never miss, and he proceeding thereon doggedly to the end, with his back to the sun and the east wind in his face. He should find friends upon his road, and win many men's esteem—let

that be sufficient for one who had sinned so much, and repented so intensely as he had done—for one who still, for Zach's sake, nursed the lie that had made a difference in many lives.

Christie was somewhat confused at Polly's manœuvres also; she had learned to look at the shady side of this romance, and to accept the position. She was content—almost—with life as it was. Teddy's embarrassment brought her round to herself, however, and with that ready tact in leaping back to quiescence, which is not uncommon in ladies "put out a bit," she was speedily herself and at her ease.

Thus they proceeded toward Upper Ground Street, a few yards in advance of Martin and his sister—and Teddy found his natural voice by degrees. He was assured that Martin had kept his secret, and that Christie had never guessed it, was this wise youth; therefore he assumed a character appropriate to the occasion, that might have deceived less clear-sighted people than the Wynns. He talked rather too much at last, and was too much like the old Teddy to be genuine; but he fancied that he was doing it very well indeed, and as he had only himself to satisfy, that was sufficient. He was sure that no one could have guessed, by his business-like face, his business-like conversation, how intensely happy he was that night with Christie's hand upon his arm, resting there in all sisterly faith, which she would not have allowed had she known all! A little hand, that was tucked under his arm trustfully, instead of the tips of two or three fingers balancing themselves on one particular spot on his coat. Yes, he was intensely happy—this was one of his nights to be marked with a white stone; he thought so then—he looks back at it, now it is darker and made more memorable by subsequent events, and realizes the blissful feeling of that walk through London streets. He had been her companion in many walks before—when she was a girl, and he was "growing good;" when she was a young woman and he was her escort to chapel on Sunday evenings sometimes; when he loved her just as well as in the present hour, but when they were not days of happiness like this one! There was something strange and touching in this walk; it had chanced upon him; he had felt very lonely in himself, despite the efforts that he had made to hide his

loneliness, and the sudden burst of light upon him was to be enjoyed keenly, if furtively.

He had no doubt that he was making himself out a very mercenary being to Christie, when he spoke of Stanley and Burns; but that did not affect his happiness in the least. The business topic was to deceive her; and he could talk upon business and think of his good-fortune with her at the same time, like a Teddy with two heads.

"I always made up my mind to rise in the world a little," said Teddy; "and so I went to Stanley and Burns, where I got higher wages. I'm saving very rapidly, Miss Christie."

"I am very glad to hear that," said Christie demurely.

"They put me on all the best work," said Teddy; "and of course it's a pleasure to be thought a great deal of. It's a greater pleasure to think that I am following in your father's steps and have been lucky to excel in his own art."

"He always thought that you would excel, Teddy," answered Christie.

"Yes, I remember," said he, ruefully. "I was always clever with my eyes and fingers. Brought up long ago to look sharp after every thing, and pick up any thing in my way."

He had a dismal satisfaction in referring to those old times; he fancied that he was acting fairly to Martin Wynn's daughter by alluding to them now—by letting her keep in remembrance that past estate from which he had arisen. He even hazarded a short laugh at the conclusion, as though it was a good joke. Christie regarded him with an intentness that made him color again.

"You do not make a jest of that?" she asked.

"A jest—God forbid!"

"Why speak of it at all?" she said with a voice that had the faintest tone of anger in it. Had she guessed Teddy's motive in thrusting the subject upon her?

"I like to think of it sometimes."

"Why?"

"It keeps me in my place," he answered; "shows me what I am fit for, and what I am *not* fit for."

"Your brother Zachary—does he think like this?" asked Christie.

"Oh, that's very different," replied Teddy. "Zach was

the mother's boy, and the mother had gentle blood in her, and a horror of thieves. She got on worse because she was more honest, it seemed, and Zach starved with her, while I was in *training*. He can afford to forget his past, I think—at all events, there is nothing in it that can bring a shame to him to look back upon."

"How can you be sure of that?"

Teddy flinched. No—he was not sure.

"Nothing to bring shame to him in the mother's time," he corrected, although it sounded but a repetition of his former assertion; "I dare say he has forgotten his past. In his place I might."

"You never see him?"

"Yes, I do. I catch a glimpse of him at Henwood's Wharf occasionally. I sit by the window and see him occasionally drive in and out, in that carriage he has set up. He don't look so well as I could wish—I'm afraid that he's in too great a hurry to grow rich."

"A strange brother," murmured Christie.

"I don't see that," said Teddy, returning to his old part. "I should have acted just the same in his place."

"What stories you are telling, Teddy!" said Christie.

"I—I really think I should," said he more energetically. "I should have worked as hard at the business, and tried to get rich as fast as he."

"Turning your back upon the brother?"

"Only for a time, till I could surprise him with a lift upward also—just as Zach will surprise me."

"You think that?"

"Sometimes," answered Teddy dryly; "but I don't build upon it. Zach is married now, and has a wife's interests to study before his vagabond brother. But there's good feeling in Zach, and you and I will see it developed more plainly in a year or two. He's a good fellow at heart."

"You should know best," said Christie, doubtfully.

"I'm glad to see him strong and hard, and full of energy," said Teddy, continuing a subject that seemed "safe" to dwell on; "for my impression of him was, that he was always rather weak than otherwise. Inclined to be led by others—instead of taking the lead himself. It's a great change, and I'm very glad of that."

"You have not seen his wife?"

"Once at a distance on a grass-plat with him," replied Teddy—"a trifle too tall for little Zach; but then that does not matter, if she's fond of him. It was a love-match, and so another stroke of luck for the young rascal; for when a man and woman really— By George! I'm talking like a book, and a book full of nonsense, too. What work is your father upon now?"

So the conversation took a sober and practical turn, and the chance that Christie Wynn had had passed away from her for good. She had wished for the chance, and it had come to her during one portion of the dialogue, and then her natural shyness had stood in the way. She had wished to dwell more upon Teddy's past life, and had almost found the courage to hint—being very fond of this tall, plain, earnest-faced man—that the past was not worth considering if the present were good; that *no one* thought any thing but the better of Teddy for his new life; and even that he should not act as if he thought that it debarred him from *any thing*; when the subject had drifted somehow to Zach, and now from Zach to her father's pursuits—a topic that she had always grown eloquent upon until that night.

But still it was a happy walk for her, as well as for Teddy. It was like the old times, "with a difference;" it presaged a better understanding in the future between her father and him—between him and herself. She was full of FAITH now—for she, in her confident little heart, believed that she should marry Teddy presently. She had been very doubtful until then—now she could take hope to herself, and bide her time—waiting, "oh! ever so many years," and feeling assured that he would wait, and never think of any body else. She believed that she was acquainted with every turn of Teddy's character; she saw clearly enough his motive for leaving Griffin Street, and that constituted him her hero. She had loved him long ago, she knew now, for his reverence for her father, his gratitude, his thorough self-denial—and now she only wanted an opportunity to let him see her love. She would never tell him—if he could not find it out; but from that night she hoped that he would make the discovery one day, and not be so tiresome with his humility and bashfulness! Yes, one day he would see all the truth—she was very young still, and could afford to wait as well as he.

At Upper Ground Street at last, and waiting for Polly and Martin to come up with them. Martin was gently reproofing his sister as they came within hearing of them.

"It never struck me before that you were so horribly slow in your movements, Polly," he said. "How you have crawled along, to be sure! It is just as if you had done it on purpose."

"What should I want to walk slowly for?" said Polly. "I'm sure that we've kept this couple in sight all the way."

"Perhaps they've been walking slowly too, to aggravate us," added Martin. "Pull the bell, Teddy; and rouse the echoes of Henwood's Wharf. I suppose it's not appropriate to this place to receive the old gentleman with three cheers."

Teddy rang the bell, and Speck immediately responded, barking with all his might for an instant, and then following up with a low and miserable whine, that was not peculiar to Speck.

"Halloo!" said Martin, "what ails Speck to-night?"

The four stood there waiting for the advancing feet of Charles Wynn, watchman. But the well-known shuffle of the feet, the tap, tap of the stick, did not follow as usual upon the clanging of the warehouse bell.

"He's deafer than usual to-night, poor old gentleman," said Martin. "Ring again, Teddy."

Teddy and Martin looked at each other in a strange inquiring manner—there came to both of them one thought; Teddy rang, however, again, and Speck's bark answered him.

"Something wrong!" they both ejaculated, and then Teddy darted into the roadway, ran a few yards down the street to the next gates, which were lower, and opened on a yard; gave one spring toward them, drew himself up, and was over them with a cat-like agility.

"Oh! my father!—my poor old father!" cried Polly, bursting into tears.

"Hush! hush!" cried Martin. "Don't be in a hurry to alarm yourself. He may be asleep. He is a very old man, and needs more rest. It's nothing, I hope."

"I'm sure it is."

Martin was sure too—the foreknowledge that comes to us sometimes had stolen to all three there.

Suddenly the gate was wrenched back, and Teddy appeared blocking up the aperture.

"Keep Christie back, sir," he cried, with excitement in his face, his voice, his shaking hands. "Keep Miss Polly back—I want you, sir, at once! There has been foul play here!"

Martin leaped through, and Polly screamed, and tried to follow him.

"Not dead—don't say that he has died like this, Teddy?" cried Christie.

"Dead, and gone to heaven, Christie!" said Teddy, wringing his hands. "Here, under the very archway where my mother died!"

CHAPTER VI.

ONLY HIMSELF TO CARE FOR.

THERE had been foul play at Henwood's Wharf that night. An attempt had been made to break into the counting-house—a block of brick-work standing apart from the great warehouse at the end of the yard—an attempt that had been foiled by old Wynn's vigilance. The place had been entered, for the lock of the outer door was picked, and there were muddy footmarks in the passages—strangely muddy for the season, it seemed, till it was suggested that the thieves had come by water, and possibly waded through the mud in the inner dock left by the late tide.

No profitable result to the water-rats had ensued, however. The safe was intact, although a drill had been tried upon it—all the notes, checks, bills of exchange, and money that had come in after banking hours, were secure still. The account-books had been tossed about, and the head clerk's desk opened with a chisel that had broken short during the operation, and was left upon the floor; but there had been no money found any where; the discovery had followed closely upon the attack, and only the poor old watchman had suffered. How he had suffered, shrewd gentlemen from Scotland Yard made guesses at; there had been no deliberate attempt to incapacitate the watchman in the first instance, they thought; the thieves had probably found their way into the place from the river, and had done their best to get through the noisy part of their work before Mr. Wynn's

arrival; then had ensued Mr. Wynn's alarm, a probable rush of the thieves from the premises, an ineffectual attempt of the watchman to grapple with one of them, an ugly blow on the back of the head, or a violent thrust backward, that caused the blow in falling, and thus put the house of Wynn in mourning for the next twelve months.

Yes, evidently that inner dock had been of service to the thieves, for there was Henwood's boat aground, and footprints in the mud—more than footprints, a regular upheaving of the bottom of the dock, as though there had been a dance there, or a fight, or a general "shake down," ending with a procession of footprints that seemed to march directly into the river, ostensibly winding up the ill success of the adventure by suffocation in Thames water.

Measurements were taken before the tide came up again, and Scotland Yard folk were very busy for an hour or two. Zach had arrived by this time—he had been sent for in a hurry—and Mr. Tinchester and the partner went into committee on this daring attempt to rob the premises, while a bitter grief found vent across the way. Zach came to the door of that house, haggard enough with excitement, about one in the morning, and Teddy came down to speak to him. So with the shadow of death in Upper Ground Street, the brothers met again. Always something strange to bring these two together.

"You will not come up now, Zach," said Teddy, without any preliminary greeting, "they can't see any body."

"Who is there?"

"All of them."

"Tell them that I am very sorry," said Zach; "that any thing that I can do—"

"Leave that to me," interrupted his brother.

"A hard end to a life that has been hard," muttered Zach; "why did he not leave the place before, I wonder! He must have been near upon eighty years of age, poor fellow! Is there any one behind you there?"

"No one."

"Come into the street—I wish to speak to you, where I can be sure that we may not be overheard."

Teddy followed his brother into the middle of the road, leaving the door in Upper Ground Street open.

"You were the first to get into the premises, Teddy,"

Zach said; "were there any proofs—any signs—of the robbers there?"

"Not any."

"You guess?" he said in a lower yet harsher whisper.

"Yes—if he is living still—it is he!"

"Find him out—you know all the haunts of London better than I—tell him to quit the country, and save me—you and me," he corrected—"from the shame of his conviction."

"Take his part against his dead friends!" cried Teddy indignantly—"against the man who was a father to us, who saved you, and whom I loved! I will not move a step—let him be hanged!"

"Our own father, Teddy," said Zach, gloomily.

"I can not think of *his* safety," cried Teddy, turning away; "if I find him out, it will be to give him up, if he is guilty of this act."

Teddy strode back into the house, and closed the door. He was angered at Zach's want of sympathy in the Wynn grief, or Zach's anxiety for his own name—he did not believe that it was the son's interest in the father that had brought Zach there that early morning. But he went up stairs to forget it all in the grief which met him in that second floor front—to take his share of sorrow with them, and leave all else to people of more mind and less heart than he. Presently he might have other thoughts—not now.

Those thoughts came when the grief was less acute—when all the inquiry into the death of Charles Wynn, watchman, had been made, and all that remained of the old and faithful servant had been laid to rest. Then Teddy had more time to think. Back again at Stanley and Burns's, over his marqueterie-work, he brooded upon that short dialogue which he had had with Zach, and his brother's last words seemed ever ringing in his ears, "Our own father, Teddy." He became very curious about that father, anxious to see him, to find him, and know the whole truth—hoping, perhaps, that it might not be so bad in reality as he believed. There was a verdict of Willful Murder against some person or persons unknown, and a reward of fifty pounds had been offered by government; the firm of Henwood and Henwood had refused to add an extra farthing to the reward, "upon principle"—whatever that meant—the sleuth hounds of the law were hunting about, and there was danger in every

shadow of the streets. Teddy was grieved, confused. He had no tender recollections of his father; he could not recall to mind one kind word that had been ever given him; he felt even a bitter enmity against the hand that had shortened Charles Wynn's life, but there were times when he thought it best for Richard Fernwell, if he was the murderer, to escape—best for him and for those whom he had cast into mourning. He thought it strange sometimes that Martin Wynn never spoke of his father in connection with the outrage—never put together the present crime with that past conspiracy which had been thwarted. It was all so long ago—and the marquetier-worker probably never called to mind that old story. Teddy was sure—and he was glad—that Martin had forgotten it.

At all events, thought Teddy, he must find his father and know the whole truth. Afterward to act as he thought best and most just. To screen, to pardon, to deliver up to the vengeance of the law, he scarcely knew which—but he felt that he would like to see his father; that, by some means or other, he must see him. He did not believe it possible that poor old Wynn had been deliberately sacrificed; and he would have given all he possessed in the world to hear that it was chance that had killed him. He was unhappy in the midst of these thoughts, and the desire to find his father increased upon him. He had even a faint hope that it might not be his father after all—that other hands had broken open Henwood's counting-house; that Richard Fernwell was innocent of the deed, and that the discovery might take this new load from his heart.

Teddy went in search of Richard Fernwell, then. In the spare moments of his work, in the early morning, when thieves and spies were sleeping, in the "dinner-hour," when he went without dinner to look for him; late at night, when the places he explored were full of danger, Teddy hunted for his sire. But the search had baffled the police—or the police were hanging back, anticipative of a higher reward, and of Henwood and Henwood adding an extra fifty pounds, possibly—and Teddy was baffled also.

This strange quest preyed on Teddy, and rendered him strange. Those who were full of grief for Charles Wynn even began to remark his eccentricity. He was seldom at home in Upper Ground Street; and Polly stitched and cried

in that top room, and the brightness which she always pointed out to others was beyond her ken. Martin and Christie called very often, talked of a new scheme that they had, in which Polly was concerned, waited till a late hour to see Teddy now and then, and left, none the better for waiting. So three or four weeks went by; no Richard Fernwell was found; there had ensued a murder more sensational, and "something like a burglary"—twenty thousand pounds' worth of jewelry decamped with, and the detectives in search of prey that had left a decent trail behind it. But Teddy persevered, and all the London haunts that he had known in his time were visited one by one. It was a soul-depressing search; it affected him, and weighed heavily upon him; it seemed to his imagination as if he were drifting back to his old awful life, and there was no escape from it. It became almost a monomania with him; he must see his father and hear the whole truth. If that father had been the cause of the old man's death, why, that was one more barrier between him and the Wynns—as if there had not been barriers enough already in his path! He would be very glad to hear Richard Fernwell deny all connection with the robbery—he trusted that he might listen to that denial; presently.

From court to court went Teddy, silently and persistently; among the thieves' quarters, Whitechapel way, Cates Street, Green Street, etc.; at the free-and-easy drinking-shops in Ratcliffe Highway; down as far as Wapping, even, where sailors were robbed, and the "profession" thereabouts had always been too violent for Mr. Fernwell; to every den in Kent Street and adjacent Bermondsey, playing his part there, feigning to be the same Teddy whom a few remembered, drinking and smoking with the rest, praying against the influences that seemed to enwrap and enervate him, and shuddering at the oaths and ribaldry at which he had laughed heartily nine or ten years since. He worked his way to Drury Lane and the Dials at last; he chose the places near home, his own places, as the least likely to constitute a den of refuge for Richard Fernwell; he went to Drag's Court, and made cautiously his inquiries, baffled at every point still.

On one occasion, late at night, he fancied that there flitted by him the figure of his brother Zach; and he turned to confront it the instant afterward, but it had vanished like a

brain figure that had had no substantiality. It was possible that Zach was also in search of his father, but it did not seem possible that he could so readily elude him. Once also Teddy saw Martin Wynn, and he hid away from him on the dark staircase of a court in "Short's Gardens," and hoped that the suspicion had not come at last to his friend's mind, and that Martin, with sterner motives—motives that were more intelligible—had not also begun *his* search. He had not understood Martin lately, any more than Martin had understood him—the world had darkened very much since that check had come to Upper Ground Street.

One more week now, thought Teddy, and he would give up farther inquiry for Richard Fernwell, and devote himself to the lonely woman more. She and he but caught passing glimpses of each other through the week, and only on Sundays were they like the mother and son—or brother and elder sister—that they had always been. One week more, and he would shake off that longing to find his father, and try his best to bring the smiles back to the patient woman's face; he had a belief that his great duty lay in cheering *her* life now, making amends for part of the past wherein she had cheered his and Zach's. She did not care for any society but her own at present, he noticed; she did not seem to miss him, and she fretted a great deal over her dressmaking, which set in, in reds, and blues, and greens, and jarred unpleasantly with the deep mourning that she and Teddy wore. On the Sundays they were together; they went to church twice a day together; in the afternoon they looked at Charles Wynn's grave, where Polly cried afresh, and Teddy compressed his lips and thought of his father again, and felt the desire to know all become more intense as he stood there.

One evening late in August, Teddy returned home at eleven in the evening, to find Martin Wynn sitting with Polly. Brother and sister had been talking long and anxiously—talking also very seriously—together, but the discussion had ended an hour ago, and they were waiting up, both of them, for Teddy. He felt almost like a guilty being as he came in, tired and dispirited.

"Late hours, Teddy," said Martin, gravely surveying him. "What is on at Stanley and Burns's that they keep you so hard at work there?"

"Nothing particular, sir," replied Teddy.

"Then you haven't come straight home," said Martin, quickly.

"No, sir, I have been for a stroll," said Teddy. "After work at the inlaying, it is—it is almost necessary to take a long walk. I had no idea that it was so late as this."

Neither had he, till he had caught a glimpse of the clock at the public-house in Upper Ground Street.

Martin looked at his watch.

"Yes, it is late," he said; "and Christie all alone, too. Sit down, Teddy; I have been waiting to tell you a little news."

Teddy sat down and looked nervously at Martin Wynn.

"Christie and I have been persuading Polly to give up this place—we have succeeded at last, and Polly thinks of living with us. When the poor gentleman lived it was different, and Polly's duty lay here with him; but Polly alone is not exactly the thing. Some day Polly must take care of me instead of the father—when Christie marries, for instance," he said, looking keenly at his listener.

Teddy started, and opened and shut the hands upon his knees.

"When she marries—exactly, sir," he said, thinking that Martin was waiting for an answer from him.

"There are only three Wynns left, and it's hard to be separated. So Polly will drop her independence to-morrow, and come at last to Griffin Street, where you will not desert us altogether."

"I—I have not thought of coming yet, sir; this is news that takes me a little aback."

"You must come to Griffin Street, now and then," urged Martin; "you haven't been the same man since you left it. There, you haven't improved, Teddy," added Martin, frankly.

"No, sir. I don't suppose that I have."

"You seem to be—a little unsettled. I don't know the reason—I'll not attempt to find a reason—but I hope that you will not forget the old friend, the old adviser, when a trouble turns up. Losing you, we haven't lost our interest, and we are—all of us—concerned at any change in you."

"I am unsettled," murmured Teddy; "you are very kind, sir. I will fight my way back to my old self in a short while. I shall not give way."

"Give way—why, no!" cried Martin.

"These are strange times," said Teddy; "and I am strange with them. But don't lose your trust in me. I will ask for patience from you all—I repeat that I will fight my way back to my old self."

"And to Griffin Street?"

Teddy did not answer. Farther away from him than ever seemed the home of Martin Wynn.

"And to Griffin Street?" repeated Martin, who had a strong objection to his questions remaining unanswered.

"Presently, sir, perhaps—give me time."

In the time when he should not be misunderstood or suspected—yes, when Christie was married, it might come to pass.

"So I waited to-night, to confer with you concerning your future intentions—to suggest a new lodging for you, and so on."

Teddy thought for a moment, then said—

"I shall stay here, sir."

"Indeed! Why?"

"I am used to the place—it has been a fair home to me—it is full of associations that have kept me grateful, and I shouldn't like to leave it."

"God bless you, Teddy!" burst forth Polly Wynn; "it's what I've said to Martin, or it's what I've tried to say."

Teddy saw that Martin was embarrassed, and that, for some reason not yet explained to him, it was necessary that Polly should go to Griffin Street. He saw, too, very clearly that it was the best for Polly, and he was as quick as his wont with his reply.

"Oh! but with you there will be sad associations, Miss Polly," he said; "every time you come into this room you would miss *him*, and it would be opening the wound afresh; and you alone so much would become very dull here. But here I shall be—oh! quite happy. Here the first good impulse came to me to leave my brother to you—here my brother Zach was saved. This is holy ground!"

Martin laid his large hand on Teddy's arm.

"Teddy, I have been lately full of doubts concerning you—you have terribly bothered me. But I see that it is all right. You, old fellow, will forgive such a fleeting suspicion as mine?"

"I deserved it, sir," said Teddy; "I have not been myself, and I am not able to explain yet a while, the mystery that has grown round me."

"I can trust you," said Martin, rising.

"Yes—I think you can," answered Teddy.

Martin was uneasy concerning Teddy still; he did not doubt him then, but he doubted the policy of any mystery between them—mystery he had always abhorred. Teddy's was a trustful nature—if he had made any dangerous acquaintances now!

Martin went away directly afterward, and Polly and Teddy were left together.

"It will be a great change for us two," he said.

"You are sorry, Teddy?"

"To be sure—I am sorry," answered he. "Sorry for myself—which is selfish, but glad for you, at all events."

"I don't know what is to become of you—what you'll do without somebody to take care of you."

"See me take care of myself," cried Teddy, laughing, or attempting to laugh. "I'll turn Robinson Crusoe here, and be as happy as he was."

"But he wasn't happy."

"He made himself pretty comfortable under the circumstances."

"You did not expect this change, Teddy?"

"Well, no. I fancied that you would go on with your dressmaking, and I with the marqueterie—you my landlady, and I the lodger and friend. I fancied that I should have to take care of you, Miss Polly, and keep you as bright as I could; but never mind that."

"It isn't as if we were about the same age," said Polly; "but Martin says the lodgers will sneer at us, and even slander us—and Martin knows the world so well. I didn't think of any one saying a word against you and me."

"Any one had better not, in my hearing," said Teddy; "but," with a great gasp, "I didn't think of that myself. Confound it!—has any body said any thing?"

"Oh no. They have all been very kind to me."

Teddy fell into thought again for a while.

"It's true enough—people will talk," said Teddy. "Why didn't I think of that before. Can't we stop it?"

"There's nothing to stop, Teddy."

"If things had been different—altogether different," said Teddy, "why, I might have asked you to marry me, Miss Polly, taking pity on my loneliness!"

"Oh! good gracious!" exclaimed Polly, "you *are* unsettled, or you'd never talk like this, you silly blundering boy you. Why, ain't I old enough to be your mother?"

"I don't know," said Teddy, "it's likely enough. But I should have tried hard to make happy one who has been a great friend to me—I should very much like somebody to live for!"

It was a strange wail from the inner chamber, where all discontent was stored, telling of his sense of loneliness, but of his true devotion to the Wynns. Polly's lip quivered, for she was easily affected at that time. She saw all the truth in Teddy, and her heart was touched by his words.

"Why, you silly goose," she exclaimed, with her first effort at cheerfulness since her father's death, and an odd effort, and under peculiar difficulties, it was, "what next will you think about? A pretty wife I should make you—an old woman close on forty-two! Why, Teddy," speaking in an excited tone, "Teddy, you foolish fellow, I thought that I was going to marry your father once!"

Teddy recoiled at this. That secret had never been related to him.

"Marry my father!" he cried. "You?"

"When he was a young man down in Warwickshire, and paid me a little attention. Oh! how different he was then!—what a drop for him! If they had taken him by the hand, the Henwoods, he might have been a respectable man now."

"He broke his word to you?"

"I don't know—sometimes I think that he never meant any thing—for I was vain then, and hadn't seen any company; and though he was poor, he was a gentleman."

"No one would have thought him a villain, then," said Teddy, "a schemer, perhaps—a man easily tempted from good—but not a vile hardened wretch as he has since become. Tell me what he was like when you were a girl!"

Then Polly Wynn told the whole story, and Teddy listened with great intentness, and built some hopes from the narrative, forgetting altogether the half proposal that he had recently made to the narrator.

The next day Polly Wynn packed up, and Teddy came home early to help her, and to go into some business accounts. Polly had intended to call in a broker and sell off her furniture—the deal table, the sturdy, well-seasoned chairs, with the volatile cushions, even the geraniums, dusty, but full-leaved with the summer; but Teddy had wanted the home intact, and could afford to lay out a little in furniture. Business concluded, and the packing finished, there remained only a cab to fetch; and that Teddy procured her, coming home inside so full of thought that he allowed the cabman to pass the house before he remembered where he was.

Then Teddy and the cabman, making several journeys down stairs with the boxes, and half filling the interior with choice articles that Polly wished to have under her own eye; after that Polly's visits to the lodgers; finally Polly coming back with Speck under her arm into that front room, where Teddy now waited for her. He saw that Polly was very nervous and childlike in her manners that day, and he assumed, in consequence, a more manlike deportment. He stood up as she entered, and extended both his hands, trying hard for a bright smile, that should keep her firm and win a smile back. But Polly was too nervous and excited to take her cue from him, and she upset all Teddy's arrangements, and nearly Teddy himself, by dropping Speck, and flinging herself suddenly forward on his chest, and putting her arms round him.

"To think that I leave you all alone here, boy!" she cried, "and that we break up home together—and you won't come—I know you won't—to Griffin Street! Be a good boy ever, Teddy—I'm sure you will—and don't—oh! don't forget us!"

"Is it likely—HERE!"

Then he turned away his head to hide a tear or two from her, and told her the instant afterward that it was very silly to cry, that there was nothing to cry about, that they should see each other more often than she fancied. He got her and Speck down stairs into the cab, and then he shook hands with her and kissed her, as a son might kiss his mother going a long journey.

"God bless you, oldest and best of friends!" he cried; "you will be sure to find happiness in Martin Wynn's house."

"I—I hope so."

Then she gave one upward look at the old lodgings, and was driven away westward.

Teddy watched the cab out of sight, and then plodded up stairs into the front room, and sat down in the capacious arm-chair before the empty fireplace.

"So they drop off one by one," he murmured; "new duties and new lives. So left alone in the world, Teddy, with only yourself to care for!"

BOOK VI.

A HARD TASK.

CHAPTER I.

A WIFE'S ECCENTRICITY.

THE London season was at an end—August had but a few more days to run; the town was empty of its fashionables; there were innumerable vacancies at the clubs; the drives and rides in the park had lost three fourths of their attractions; West-end trades-folk were thinking and praying for next season; the Opera-houses were shut; the civil young men at the libraries had less to do, and office clerks were taking holidays.

Mrs. Henwood had gone out of town with the rest of the fashionables—gone away to Scarborough with one maid, in a quiet sort of style that was new to her. Gone away to have her nerves braced, and to try the effect of sea air on the odd thoughts that had been troubling her lately.

Zach and his wife were still in town, and likely to remain there. Zach did not understand the importance of leaving off work and rushing away to waste his time—and what was of more consequence, his money—for one sixth of the whole year at a watering-place. He preferred to keep on working; he found his pleasure at the wharves; he was becoming rich and putting by money every year; all his excitement was in London, and excitement did him good and kept him energetic. It was like a spell upon him, this incessant application to his business; it astonished Mr. Tinchester; it was nearly the death of the clerks, whom he expected to work with the same amount of vigor. Time enough for rest when he was an older man, thought Zach; he was young and strong, and before him was a harvest to

reap—while the sun shone let him gather into his barns. He was not looking well, his friends—that is, his business acquaintances—told him; there was no flesh on his bones; his face was thinner, if more delicate than ever in its peculiar handsomeness; his eyes were of an unnatural brightness, full of the fire of money-getting; his hands one could almost see through. He laughed when he was recommended change; he had not time for change, he said; he felt well and strong enough, and he could not afford to lose a day in pursuit of a pleasure which, apart from business, he felt that he should not obtain. He had a motive, too, for remaining in London—more than one motive—but he was a quiet man, and kept his motives to himself. Not even his wife, from whom he should have had no secrets—and yet who had a secret from him, the reader is aware—guessed for an instant the hidden motives of the man whom she had married for love.

Lettice might have left town with her mother if she had wished, but she preferred to remain at home in her villa on Stamford Hill to going away without Zach. Not that she was intensely happy with Zach Fernwell, alias Henwood, but she was his wife, and she had seen the change in him as well as other people had. She was not happy, we repeat; she loved him well enough—better than he deserved, possibly—but there had come to her an inner consciousness that he had never loved her, that after all, and despite all protestations, it was only the money! She kept this secret to herself; it would not do, she thought, to own that the mother had been right in her past opposition, and read Zach's character better than she had; she would never own that her judgment had been so much at fault, for she was a proud and obstinate woman.

In the last days of August, late at night at her villa, sitting alone there—sitting up for Zach—hers was not a face expressive of much happiness at home. She had been writing till ten o'clock—writing that book which was her distraction to write, and which it distracted Zach in another fashion to see her write, he detested authorship and author-esses so much. He knew but little of books, save account-books, and he had never read a novel in his life—altogether, a despicable character, the reader perceives!

After ten had struck, Lettice had sat patiently till eleven

—then till twelve impatiently, losing her temper somewhat, as was natural with a young wife, whom her husband had not informed of any late “intentions.” At half past twelve more nervous than irritable, and at one inclined to put her bonnet on, walk down to the gate, and look toward London. She had dismissed the servants to their rooms, and was standing at the window staring out at the dark roadway, when Zach arrived in a cab, paid the cabman, after considerable haggling about the fare, and advanced up the long walk to the door of his house. He admitted himself into his home by means of a latch-key, and came into the front room to start a little at his white-faced wife awaiting him there. He had been too full of thought to notice her at the lighted window, and her sudden presence certainly scared him, and as certainly disturbed his equanimity.

“What is the good of sitting up till this hour, Lettice?” he said, sharply.

“You did not say that you were likely to be late to-night.”

“I am always likely to be late,” he answered, flinging himself wearily into a chair; “my time is not my own, and is uncertain with me.”

“Yes,” answered Lettice.

He looked very tired, and as he half closed his eyes to rest them from the strain of the day, Lettice shivered—he looked so like a man who might die suddenly in that chair, worn out with money-hunting.

“I would not sleep there, Zach,” she said, after a pause—“you will be better in bed, if you are tired.”

“I should have come straight to bed if you had not been sitting up.”

“You will go to sleep, and wake unrefreshed.”

“I am not thinking of sleep.”

“What are you thinking about, then?” asked Lettice, almost angrily—“why come home night after night like this?”

“Why sit up to watch for me, if I give you any concern? You are not well—you need rest yourself.”

“If you would only keep the business to itself, and not bring it home with you,” said Lettice, “I should be a happier woman! Oh! Zach, you were not always like this—you were more like other men.”

The entreaty softened him, and he rose from his chair, and kissed her. After all, he loved her in his fashion.

"I'll do my best presently, Lettice. A little more labor now, and we shall retire early from business, and be rich folk, you and I. Thank your stars, girl, that you have an industrious husband."

They repaired to their room, good friends, it may be said. Lettice was tired, and went to sleep at once—Zach was restless, and could not sleep. That inability to sleep aggravated Zach very much; night after night he cursed his active brain that would not let him close his eyes when he had the *time to spare*! It had been like this two or three months now, and he had been almost inclined to ask a doctor what ailed him; and then a firm belief in nothing ailing him saved him a doctor's bill, and frivolous advice to take care of himself, and try change. Take care of himself!—he did not require caution in that respect; if he esteemed any one in the world before Zach Fernwell, why, write him down an idiot. Try change!—he had tried more change than he cared to confess. He fought hard for sleep that night, and failed. Failing utterly, he thought of to-morrow's business, to-morrow's profit and loss, of his father, his brother Teddy, the tragedy at Henwood's Wharf, and his wife. His wife, whom he looked at in her sleep, and who, he thought, would be more happy when her child was born. She would not trouble herself so much about him then, he hoped, and distress him so often with her interest. He did not fall asleep till five in the morning; at seven o'clock he was astir again, protesting to his wife that he had had a good night; at eight he was on his road to London; before nine he was in his city offices; at half past nine a messenger arrived in breathless haste to tell him that his wife wanted him back—that the doctor and nurse had been sent for, and that she was nervous, and desired him in the house.

Zach went home somewhat unwillingly; he did not see of what use he could be, but he went back notwithstanding, and an hour later the nurse put a red-faced, hook-nosed amalgamation into his arms, and told him that the baby was very like its father. Zach thought that it was very like a rabbit, and was glad when the nurse had taken it away from him, and relieved him from an awkward and unnatural position. He was glad, however, that it was all over, and

that mother and child were doing well; he should get back to business in the afternoon for an hour or two, probably; he went up to see his wife, and to offer his congratulations, and to wonder if the broad and baggy woman in attendance called him Mr. Henry Wooden from sheer impudence or ignorance. He was thinking of returning to business, and was in the drawing-room putting on his gloves, when the nurse came running down to ask him to send for the doctor again, as Mrs. Henry Wooden wasn't half so well.

The doctor was procured, and Zach waited very impatiently for his verdict on the case. He sent up at last to ask what had happened, and went up stairs himself and listened at the door. He heard his wife's voice imploring that the doctor or nurse would send for her husband directly; she was sure that she was going to die; it was no use telling her that all was well, and she would speedily recover; that it was nothing but nervousness, for she knew better. She must see her husband—there was a heavy weight upon her soul, and she must ask his forgiveness, and tell him how she had conspired against him and his family. The doctor failing to pacify her, and dreading her nervous excitement, gave orders for Zach, and Zach appeared before the nurse had reached the door.

"Zach, dear, you will forgive me?" she cried. "I think that I am going to die—and you *will* forgive me?"

"Yes—yes, whatever it is—my free forgiveness!"

"Send them away," she whispered; and the doctor and nurse, both full of curiosity—ready to burst with it, in fact—went out of the room, and waited on the landing, the doctor looking at the nurse's mob cap by way of an object of interest, the nurse counting the doctor's waistcoat buttons, and thinking what a heap there was of them.

"Zach, I haven't been happy, for I have been guilty of a great crime. I did not think of it till I heard that your brother was honest and poor. I thought only of you—and I secured your interests, and then destroyed the deed of gift."

"My brother!—the deed!—what deed, Lettice?"

She did not answer. She closed her eyes, and gave a long sigh. Zach knew the instant afterward that she had fainted, and the doctor and nurse, upon being summoned, had all their work before them to bring her back to life. The doc-

tor would have no more confessions ; he assured Zach that it was all an undue excitement of the brain, which would compose itself after a draught that he would send. Zach went down stairs to consider if his wife were mad, or if there were any method in her madness !

All that day, apart from business, he thought of this ; all the next, when Lettice saw him again, and spoke not of her mysterious words ; all the third day, when he asked her if she remembered what she had said to him, and she shuddered, and said " Yes," begging that he would not speak again concerning it, until she was well and strong. There had been something real in it, after all, he thought—it was not the distorted imagination of an excited woman ; would she tell him when she was strong again, or once again deceive him ? He had never believed that she was deceitful—he was glad of it, he fancied, at times, for now the deceit was not all on one side, and all the virtues on another. He would wait as patiently as possible for the explanation.

But he found that patience was not one of his virtues ; there was a probability of Mrs. Henwood coming to town to see her daughter, and he rightly or wrongly allied his mother-in-law with the secret, and feared that an influence for harm might be exercised by Mrs. Henwood upon Lettice. He did not wait patiently ; he began to work for himself, to turn over his wife's papers, her pages of manuscript, and her letters—he must find out who had been wronged, what necessity there had been to destroy a deed, and in what strange manner his brother was mixed up with the mystery.

Here might come to his hand a grand chance to add to his own fortunes, and to raise his brother to a higher sphere. Of his own fortunes he would consider in the first place—that was natural—but after that, if he could help Teddy without harm to himself, he would do it. There came wild spasmodic fits of remorse concerning that brother occasionally ; he knew that he had not treated him well—that he had been afraid of him, and afterward almost ashamed of him—and across the vista at which he looked back now and then, he saw that brother's struggles for him. It pleased him to think that he might be of help to Teddy ; meanwhile let him set his wits to work—those wits which had never failed him, and of which he was vain—to sift the mystery to the bottom.

CHAPTER II.

TEDDY FINDS HIS FATHER.

TEDDY FEERNWELL found it lonely in Upper Ground Street after the departure of his last friend. He felt more apart from all true friends after that—set apart by a barrier which there was no surmounting.

He could not go to Griffin Street till Christie was married; and there being no talk of Christie's marriage—what had become of Mr. Ubbs, he wondered!—he must rest content with his loneliness.

Teddy had a very poor opinion of himself just then; he was still interested in his father's whereabouts, and intensely anxious to find that father, and this interest and anxiety made him feel that he was a traitor to the Wynn cause. He knew that much of Martin Wynn's new and hard manner was attributable to the watchman's death at Henwood's Wharf—that Martin's pride had always objected to his father holding ignoble service there—and now the father dying in that service, and dying in that cruel way, had cast a gloom upon the marqueterie-worker, that was not likely yet a while to know much diminution. Teddy felt that Martin Wynn was keeping something back—a suspicion of the truth, perhaps—and he feared, even, that the shrewdness of his friend might first discover Richard Fernwell. It did not seem possible, Teddy thought, that Martin should have entirely forgotten the existence of the man who planned ten years ago the robbery of that very place where poor Charles Wynn met death. He distrusted Martin's studied avoidance of the subject, and he felt—he could scarcely assign a reason for it then—opposed to his old master. He had loved the watchman very much, and he had never loved his own father; but still there came to him, as there had come to Zach for different reasons, perhaps, a strange desire to be of service to the wretch who had taught him so surely every thing that was evil in his youth, that it was only by a miracle he had escaped.

And in the midst of all this uncertainty there shimmered a faint hope that his father had not done the deed, and that it would be good and grateful news to hear it from his lips. While the mystery hung before it all, he could not face the Wynns with a free heart. Only last week he and Martin met at the old man's grave by accident, and Martin thanked him for the good feeling that had brought him there, and he found that he could scarcely answer him. There again, too, Martin had asked him to come to Griffin Street, where they were all very dull, and all missed him very much; and Teddy had shaken his head, and muttered once more that it was impossible. They scarcely parted friends—not old and dear friends, as it was Teddy's pride to think they were—for Martin had gone away vexed at this obduracy, and scarcely able to attribute Teddy's firmness entirely to his love for Christie. And Martin was right. Before that love-confession was the lie which had ever kept Teddy in sore humility for his brother's sake; after it remained the mystery of Charles Wynn's death, and he could not meet the Wynns any more—not one of them—until he knew the worst, or best.

But it was very lonely in Upper Ground Street. He had that front room to himself now, and only his imagination could people it with those whom he had loved. It was a home to him to some extent; he was glad that he had clung to it after Polly had gone away.

He was sitting there one Sunday evening, thinking of the old faces that had made this home to him. Polly had been away a month; it was verging on October, and a few wet days last week had left Upper Ground Street in its usual state of "slushiness"—a state that would last all winter now. Teddy had been to church in the morning, after his usual custom, but the prayers and the sermon had not done him any good, he thought; he had been wandering about the old haunts four days last week, and the scenes and characters that he had met there would not flit away from his mind, let him try never so hard. They scared him with their hideousness; there was no temptation in them—nothing but horror—but they oppressed him very much, and they would not go away from him when he was back again in that house. He was thinking of them again that night, when some one knocked at his door as he brooded there in the twilight.

"Come in!" cried Teddy.

"Oh, I thought that you were at church, Mr. Fernwell," said the wife of a printer still living in the parlors, "and I told him so, but I said I'd come up and see, although I knocked three knocks below."

"I did not hear them, or I should have come down, of course. Am I wanted, then?"

"There's a queer-looking person wants to see you," said she; "I'd be careful, Mister Fernwell, for there's such lots of tricks about now."

"An old man somewhat—is he?" asked Teddy, eagerly.

"No—a sickly man, about thirty-five or forty."

"Well, I needn't be afraid of a sickly man, Mrs. Parks," said Teddy; "tell him to come up."

Was this a mistake? or was the truth approaching to him? He was still in doubt, when the man entered the room without any warning, and very coolly locked the door behind him. A sickly man, certainly—a green-faced man, with long horse-hair locks hanging about his head, with a tattered frock-coat, buttoned or sewed up to his chin, and with a pair of skeleton-like hands protruding from his greasy coat-cuffs. A man whom Teddy had not seen before, but whose manners and habits of life were patent to Teddy at once—he was well up in this class again!

"I beg your pardon," he said, with a blandness of demeanor that Teddy might have smiled at on another occasion; "but it's necessary to keep people out while we have a little palaver together. My name is Banks—may I sit down?"

"Yes, sit down," said Teddy; "what is it that you want with me?"

"I'm a man to whom twenty-five pounds is an object—a serious consideration, sir," said he; "and being a man of few words, I come to the purpose at once. I propose, sir, that we go shares in the reward."

"In the reward? Go on—reward for what?"

"For the apprehension *and* conviction of the murderers of Charles Wynn. I can lay my hand on two of them—your father and the other fellow!"

Teddy's right hand gripped his left wrist as in a vice, but he betrayed no excitement at the man's assertion. It was necessary to be cool and on his guard.

"Why don't you take all the reward, then?" said Teddy; "I am in the dark as to your motives."

"I can't appear; there's a case—a very unpleasant case—against me in the City, and I'm being inquired for. But you are looking for Richard Fernwell?—you have asked for him?—and are on the scent?"

"I wish to find him, certainly."

"He's not the man that did it, but—"

"Thank God!" cried Teddy, leaping to his feet; "I'm glad of that!—I've prayed for that! This is good news you've brought me, man—it makes my heart light again—where is he?"

"But you want the reward—to get the old chap out of the way of the family—"

"I wish to see my father, that's all," said Teddy, "I'm anxious to hear the whole truth—very anxious now!"

"We couldn't make out your game exactly," muttered his companion; "any more than the games of Mr. Wynn, and another cove—your brother—all on the dodge after him—playing the artful like. I've come to you, but blest if I make you out—is it the money?—and will you share fair?"

Teddy thought for an instant as to the best course to pursue. He believed that his visitor was no spy, but had been sent to test his motives, to ask for help perhaps. He read the man quickly enough—for the man was a thief and a vagabond.

"I wish to screen my father," said Teddy; "and to be of assistance to him."

"Not to give him and his pal up?"

"No. He is my father, and that is not my duty. He did not kill Charles Wynn, you say?"

"Strike me—no. He never had the pluck in him for that. Well, then, he sends me here to ask if he can trust you?"

"He can."

"And if you can trust him with a pound or two," added Mr. Banks; "for it's devilish hard up, he is. Clean floored is old Dickey at last—poor old fox, it upsets the kit of us, to see him down so low. There wasn't an artful bloke among us when he was younger. Like many clever ones, sir, he didn't make many lucky hits—but the ability was in him, sir."

"I wish to see him at once."

"Ah! that's another question," said the man; "we don't know how that will answer."

"He will trust me?"

"He's half inclined—more than half," replied Mr. Banks; "for he's hard pushed, you see. He's been killed for want of attention, nearly."

"Is he ill?"

"I should rather think he was. He met with an accident—but you'll know all about that when you see him next week."

"I will come with you to-night."

"Can't be done. He won't do any thing in a hurry—if you'll send the money—"

"I will take him ten pounds—but I will send him nothing."

"'Pon my soul, I'm sure he may trust you!" exclaimed Mr. Banks; "you were never like that other little sneak—and never split on any body when you were one of us. You'll come back to us again, for you're of the right sort—I've heard lots of stories about Teddy Fernwell."

Teddy shuddered.

"Let's go at once," he said.

"I'm with you."

They went out of the house together, and along Upper Ground Street to the steps in the Waterloo Road arches. It was dark now, and the contrast between them was not readily apparent.

"This is handy for the old quarters, Teddy," said Mr. Banks, suddenly becoming familiar.

"What old quarters—where are we going?"

"Drag's Court, Seven Dials—you *have* heard of that charming retreat for poor folk in destitute circumstances?"

"Yes."

"You were there a little while ago, inquiring for old foxy?"

"He was there, then—after all?"

"Oh! yes—and a terrible fright you gave him—I don't know why; but he's been all along a little afraid of you—never inclined to look you up as you grew older and bigger like he did his son Zach. Lord! how he hates Zach, to be sure!"

Teddy did not answer, and the two went on together

over Waterloo Bridge, up Wellington Street, and then through the streets at the back of Covent Garden Market, until they emerged upon the darker and denser locality of Seven Dials—very full of company that autumn night, and looking to Teddy more like home than ever.

Before Drag's Court at last—the refuge, and last hiding-place of thieves out of luck—a West-end Alsatia, where thieves were true to one another, and helped one another, if the reward were not too high to shake their principles.

"Wait here—you can't come on at once," said Mr. Banks, "it's not the rule."

"I may be trusted."

"I think so—but you're not expected."

"I bring money—I come in good faith."

"All right. Money we want, too. One minute, Teddy."

Mr. Banks disappeared, and Teddy took up his position with his back to the wall of the court, as he had stood, he remembered at once, waiting for the Martin Wynn that did not come to him one night as he had promised. Back again to the old life in one step; the place unchanged, the same faces in the murky street into which Drag's Court led; the same figures of crime, drunkenness, and want flitting to and fro in the darkness; the same noises in his ears from the rows of dens down that narrow causeway wherein Mr. Banks had disappeared; the same scholars in the Devil's school, boys like him and Zach, with never a chance to come to them, poor fellows! running in and out of the court, looking for father or mother, or the pals that had not turned up that evening. Had he really outlived all this, thought Teddy, or was he back again for good? Was he part of the Cimmerian darkness that seemed to enwrap this place and its denizens, and after all his strugglings was he to be drawn back into the vortex by a power that it was beyond him to withstand? He felt that he was in his true sphere; and yet, thank God! he felt strong and brave to fight against it. It depressed his spirits, for it surrounded him with his evil past, and assured him how immeasurably inferior he was to her he loved; but it was not likely that there could ensue any temptation from it, and there was a faint hope stealing to him that he might be, in his own way, a minister for good here. He prayed he might; long and intensely he prayed that it might be in his power, before he

died, to do some little good in this place. And with that prayer he became the same stout-hearted man that Martin Wynn had made him, and that Martin Wynn was.

A hand touched his arm, and brought him to the present.

"He will see you, Teddy," whispered Mr. Banks.

Teddy followed that gentleman to a house on the left, the door of which was standing open—the door of the old house wherein he had had the fever.

"Not here—surely not here!"

"Yes. This is the crib."

"How strange!" murmured Teddy.

It was the same cellar, too, to which they descended step by step. Here Teddy had nearly died of fever when he was fifteen years of age, and here he found his father. It was like a retribution on the man who had worked nothing but evil in his misspent life—both thought of their last meeting, in that very den, when they came face to face together there.

CHAPTER III.

MR. FERNWELL'S TRIBULATION.

MR. RICHARD FERNWELL'S position differed from that of his son's ten years ago, inasmuch as Mr. Fernwell was lying in the corner nearest to the small fire-grate, and lying on a mattress supported by a rusty iron bedstead. The difference was in Mr. Fernwell's favor, though that gentleman certainly looked none the happier for it.

Mr. Fernwell looked not happy, or even contented, in his new estate; he was reduced very low, his philosophy was out of gear, and rendered his position scarcely bearable. Had thirty years intervened since their last meeting in Drag's Court, he could not have looked more old or more repulsive, with an age which contained within itself no elements of respect. It was a face of crime; haggard and repulsive in its set expression always, and now rendered worse by its mask of dirt, its unshaven chin and cheeks, its evidence of a suffering that it bore ill, that it resented as one more stroke of bad luck fallen to its owner's share. Thoroughly cast on an inhospitable shore was this man-

wreck; broken up forever, and incapable of farther harm to his fellow-men.

He glared at his son from under his long shaggy eyebrows, and then reached forth with difficulty an arm attenuated by disease.

"After all these years to meet with you again—and to meet in this place! Are you too proud to shake hands with me, as Zach is?"

"No," said Teddy, taking his father's hand for a moment. "Why should I be too proud?"

"Mother's blood in you, I suppose," said Fernwell. "Well, you haven't come to look upon me as a curiosity, or to give me up? You've brought some money, or some drink—and that's like a good Samaritan."

"I have come to hear your story—to know all the truth."

"Curse it!—then it is out of curiosity?"

"Out of charity, say, father," said Teddy. "Here in this place you tempted me for the last time to evil—here in this place let me tempt you to good!"

"Why, that Martin Wynn has never brought you up to devil-dodging, surely," exclaimed Mr. Fernwell. "You're not in the pious line?"

"I wish I could say 'Yes.'"

"It's—it's a good joke," croaked Mr. Fernwell, feebly.

"Here, Banks, hold the light to the young beggar, and let us make sure that this is the immortal Teddy."

Mr. Banks took the light from the table, and was holding it close to Teddy's face, when Teddy somewhat unceremoniously resented the rudeness by knocking it out of his hand.

"I have not come to jest about my past or yours," he said. "I have outlived all jesting."

"And are looking at life seriously—well, I never could," answered his father, "and I never shall. Can't you find the candle, Banks?"

"I've got it," grumbled Banks, from a quadrupedal position on the earthen floor. "There was no occasion to knock it about and waste it—or ride rusty either. Cuss rusty people!"

"That fellow can leave us," said Teddy.

"You said you'd stand ten pounds—where's the money?" said Banks.

"Give him half the money, Teddy," said Mr. Fernwell, "and hand over the other half. He has been a good friend to me—I should have died without him. Bully Banks has nursed me back to life."

Teddy divided the money as his father requested. Mr. Banks immediately disappeared with his share, and Mr. Fernwell placed his under the pillow with difficulty. Mr. Banks had relighted the candle before departure, and its feeble flame, added to the flickering of a handful of coals in the grate, brought father and son into relief. But the place was damp, and light fought hard to live therein.

Mr. Fernwell gazed at his son intently for a while.

"You have altered very much," he said. "You've grown a big fellow, while he has withered and shrunk up—the devil!"

"Whom do you mean?"

"That wretch of a brother!—that unnatural and crafty hound, whom I wished that I had strangled in his cradle! That—oh!" he groaned, "I'm too weak to swear now. I've lost—every—bit of comfort!"

He lay and groaned again, fighting meanwhile for his breath—finding his voice suddenly, to shout forth—

"But I'm not going to die—I won't die to please any body! I'll live to be a curse to every body yet—knocked about and cut up as I am. See if I don't!"

"I shall never see you," said Teddy.

"And if it hadn't been for you—yes, if it hadn't been for you riding the high horse, and coming the bounce ten years ago—it wouldn't have all turned out like this. We had a chance then, the three of us—and we might have stuck together all our lives, and made no end of money."

"I have not watched for you to hear this," said Teddy, sternly; "and I will not hear it now from a man like you—from the man whom I call my father."

"An ungrateful whelp like your brother you are," muttered Fernwell.

"I can not be grateful for my past—it has stood between me and all laudable ambitions. You do not expect any gratitude from me for your efforts to sink me utterly?"

"I would have made a hero of you, Teddy," said Mr. Fernwell, in milder accents.

He could not afford to quarrel with Teddy Fernwell; he

saw a future friend in this new, strange son—this son of whom he had been afraid, and from whom he had held aloof. It might be well to humor Teddy's "serious moods;" Teddy seemed to have money, and, for reasons not fairly explained yet, to be interested in him.

"I would have made a hero of you," he repeated. "You were bad enough—too bad, I thought, ever to become an honest man, and it was possible—very possible—to shine in that sphere to which you properly belonged. But all that is past and gone—and if it be any pleasure to you, why, I am glad, Teddy, now, that you escaped me."

"You say that from the heart?" asked Teddy.

"I do. Upon my soul, I do!"

"I will be your friend, then," said Teddy, "if I can—if you had no hand in Charles Wynn's death. Tell me that, and rely upon me for any help you may require."

"Wish I may die, Teddy—here a dog's death, in this iron crib, a gallows sight too short for me, if I touched the old fellow that night."

"How did it happen?"

"Well, if you must know, Banks did it!"

Teddy, who had taken a chair by the fireside, started up at this with the intention of pursuing Banks at once, and delivering him over to the offended majesty of the law—avenging thus the death of his old friend. His father's next words arrested farther progress.

"Not intentionally—all an accident, that no man ought to swing for," said Fernwell; "sit down, and I'll tell you as much as I can before the doctor comes. As for Banks, he only wanted five pounds to get clean out of the country, and you and I will never set eyes on him again. As good a fellow as ever breathed, is Banks—many's the bit of business we've done together in our day, hanging together to the last, in good luck and bad. I wish the world was all Banks—I shouldn't be lying here at death's door. Not at death's door," he corrected, "for I'm getting on again—I only want port-wine, and calves-foot jelly, and those sorts of things, to feel more like the man I was. I'll live—I'll live you all out yet!"

Teddy looked more intently at his father—inclined his head toward him to look more closely into his face.

"You have been drinking?" he said at last.

"I've had a stimulant—I am forced to have stimulants, or double up altogether. Do you think a man can have a leg off without a stimulant afterward? Try it yourself, and be—"

"What doctor attends you?" asked Teddy.

"Oh! a clever fellow, and one of us. We've the pick of all professions among us, and he's as 'cute a fellow as ever walked the hospitals, and then took to thieving instead of poisoning. Lucky for me that he was clever, for we could not call in the respectable lot, and I had to chance it. It has all been done on the quiet—I've been cut up on the quiet like butcher's meat—I shall never forget it till my dying day, Teddy—it was horrible!"

He drew the back of his dirty hand across his eyes; his feelings were touched at his own misfortunes, or the brandy which he had taken a few minutes before Teddy's arrival was exercising its effect more.

"I have been looking for you to hear the story of that robbery—I ask for my satisfaction, hereafter for your own, to tell me all the truth. If in any way I detect you in a lie, I have done with you. I will go away, and let you die here without hope. You hear me?"

"I'm not going to die—I've got over the worst of it. Don't say any thing about my dying, Teddy. Every body says I'm looking better."

"Go on."

"This is how it happened, then," said Richard Fernwell; "I don't mind the truth, because it don't hurt me a bit. If I had had my wits about me, and the use of my limbs, by all that's holy, I should have been fifty pounds a richer man."

"By informing against Banks?" said Teddy.

"Banks is nothing to me," he said, rescinding his former verdict on that gentleman; "he was always a cowardly sneak, and he kept with me because he could not get any where else without being pounced upon, and because—ha! ha!—he didn't like me out of his sight. Oh! a nice fellow, Banks!" he cried, ironically; "he told me if I said a word to any one about the wharf, he'd jump the life out of me as I lay here. Ah! and he would, too!"

"He came to me—for what reason?"

"For five pounds to help him on—for information, too,

and to find out your game. *You* won't see him any more now, I'll wager."

"Go on with this story."

Teddy dropped into the chair again, and waited for his father's narrative. After that story would follow his own, and he believed—for he was sanguine in this matter—that it would rouse his father's feelings, and afford him hope of that father's future penitence. There was a duty to perform here, at all hazards—no matter the difference between them and their lives—that man was his father, and he must not stand aside, and let him perish.

"I'm short of breath, Teddy," said Mr. Fernwell, "so you mustn't hurry me, or object to a short cut to the facts. You see Zach now and then?"

"Very seldom."

"He's too high for you?"

"Yes—I think that he is."

"He has treated you badly?" was the eager question.

"No. Go on."

"Well, he has treated me badly. He offered me an annual income, and then he took it away again, when he was safe, the shabby hound! He threw me over, and I'm not the man to take my falls with complacency. *You* know that!"

"A malicious man—yes," said Teddy, absently.

"A man who gives as well as takes," corrected Mr. Fernwell, "and that's English. So he tried to crush me, and I thought that it would serve him right to help myself to his money—for who had a greater right than his own father to it? I always had a fancy for trying Henwood's Wharf—it was a place weak in many points, and might be managed beautifully, I thought. So Banks and I talked it over, and arranged it, as you and I and Zach talked it over ever so long ago."

"Go on," repeated Teddy.

"I'm going on as fast as I can. Do you think a man is a steam-engine?" said Mr. Fernwell, fretfully.

Teddy was silent under the rebuke, and Mr. Fernwell went on again—

"We had to watch for a slack night at the place, when there wasn't much river-work; and we watched from the river in a boat, and on that night in particular every thing

turned out first-rate, it seemed. No barges in the dock, the warehousemen off at six, the clerks at half past six, and old Wynn not due till eight. The daylight against us rather—nothing else. So we rowed quietly to the wharf, and fastened the boat to some piles outside there, because we knew that by eight the tide would have run down altogether. Every thing managed in a business sort of way, and no blundering. We took possession of Henwood's boat instead of our own, and rowed into the inner dock, intending to let it get aground there. We could walk to our own boat at low tide through the mud; and if we were quick at our work, there was a chance of rowing back. It was all marked out like print, Teddy, and it should have turned out a fortune to us."

"Go on," said Teddy again. He wished for facts, and not his father's moral reflections upon them, and he had forgotten his father's late rebuke.

"If you keep saying 'Go on,' when I'm going on, I won't say another word," he cried; "I can't be browbeaten like this. I haven't strength enough to stand it. We got into the wharf—we slipped into the counting-house—we looked about us, and tried the iron safe—I don't think that there ever was a genius for safes like Banks—and we were jogging on well, and with a chance of a good haul, when old Wynn came on duty."

Mr. Fernwell sighed, and Teddy became more interested.

"We had to stop work, while he was fresh on his beat," said Mr. Fernwell; "but we thought we knew all about watchmen, and that he would go to sleep in a corner somewhere as soon as he could, just as they all do, and that nothing would wake him in a hurry. So I watched him through the window, and when he was out of hearing by the water there, Banks went on with his work—and when he came back, Banks stopped—the drill went beautifully, Teddy, and the safe might as well have been of pasteboard. Banks prefers the drill to the wrench, because it makes less noise—that was his fancy, and it spoiled us altogether. That and the infernal dog!"

Teddy did not ask his father to go on again; and after a while, Mr. Fernwell concluded his narrative.

"Old Wynn sat himself down on that stone under the archway in Ground Street, and went to sleep, we thought,

and as we expected. Upon my word, Teddy, the old beggar was only reading out of a prayer-book by the light of his lantern, and that kept him quiet. He was alive at the first noise—he and his dog together, and it was all up. We were in a fix, but we had to run for it; he was coming straight to the counting-house, bold as brass, when we ran out, and he caught hold of Banks's shoulder with one hand, and tried to draw the rattle from his pocket with the other. Then Banks got away and pushed him back, and he fell with his head on the stones, and never moved again—the fall killed him, not Banks. It was his own fault interfering—people will interfere."

"Silence!" cried Teddy, fiercely; "that man was really my father—a man who loved me, and rejoiced to see me honest. Well for you in this hour that you did not strike him down. I think that I should have had the courage to hang you!"

"You were always so violent," said Mr. Fernwell, with a look of affright at his son; "that's why we never got on well together, and I thought that it wasn't worth while ever calling upon you with my respects. I was sorry for the old man's death—it took away every bit of thought of what I was doing, so you may guess what a fool it made me. What the devil do you think I did?"

"I know not—I care not."

"I forgot all about the tide having gone out of the dock, and jumped for the water that wasn't there, by Gord! I went down fourteen feet into the dry dock, and broke in half at the bottom—was there ever a man so unlucky as I am?"

"And your accomplice?"

"He dragged or carried me along to our own boat, and rowed off with me to Whitehall Stairs, where a friend was waiting with a cab, just as we'd arranged, in case the swag was heavy. And I got to Drag's Court somehow—the devil knows how, I don't! And here I've been ever since—operated upon, at last, because they frightened me, the brutes. I'll never believe that leg ought to have come off!" cried Fernwell, becoming furious again; "Jackson wanted something to practice on and amuse himself with, and it was a fine chance to have a chop at me! I've had the worst of it all, of course—that was natural enough. Shouldn't be surprised

if they don't find me out and lag me, as a wind-up, now Banks has gone. Who's there?" he said, in a shrill voice of alarm; "why don't you come in? There's no knocking required—I've nothing to keep secret here—who is it?"

"It's your doctor, you old fool!" said a rough voice; "I heard that you had company down here."

"Only my son—my respectable son, Mr. Jackson, whose interest in his father's misfortunes has led him to this delightful locality."

"This is Teddy, who left a name for cuteness in Drag's Court," said Mr. Jackson, advancing; "I'm proud to make Teddy's acquaintance."

Mr. Jackson, a burly ruffian, with some fragments of gentility apparent in his black coat and dirty white neckcloth, entered the room, and nodded his head familiarly at Teddy.

"Have you brought some brandy?" cried Fernwell.

"They won't stand any more, Ferny," answered the doctor; "I asked them to club round to-night at the school, but the school's in a bad way, and short of funds."

"I've got money—two sovereigns, Jackson. Get brandy—get brandy, man, and don't stand looking at me!"

"Can he be moved?" asked Teddy, pointing to his father.

The man put on his medical air immediately, and less resembled the vagabond that he was.

"Certain death to move him an inch."

"I will send some one to see him."

"Some one on whom I can rely," Teddy was about to add, but checked himself. Mr. Fernwell made an effort to start up in bed.

"Don't bring any body here—Jackson's enough—I'm better—I don't want any body to see me. It isn't safe."

"It's no good—what is the use? He can't be getting on better," said Mr. Jackson; "he can't be helped on *his* road more quickly!"

Teddy looked hard at the speaker, but Fernwell laughed.

"The road to health, he means," cried Fernwell. "He has done me a good turn. Jackson, I'm your friend for life."

"Thankee," said Jackson.

"And I'll reward you with brandy—I'll burn my benefactor's bowels up with brandy! Teddy, don't go yet."

"I'll wait till he returns."

Mr. Jackson took one of the sovereigns from his friend's

palsied hand, and then left the cellar. Teddy, who had risen, stood and surveyed his father thoughtfully.

"What are you thinking about?" asked Fernwell, tetchily.

"I am thinking if I can be of any use to you—if, with God's help, it is possible."

"You can't make me a saint—even if you're a saint yourself."

"I'm thinking, if you were to live—whether the devotion of my life to your better days would be acceptable? Whether I am not too weak, and you too hard!"

"If I had a comfortable home, and some one to look after me, and care for me, I might, old as I am, change for the better."

Fernwell took his cue too readily, and his artfulness did not deceive the son, whose face lighted not up with the words that the father had spoken.

"And I'm thinking if you were to die here—and go red-handed suddenly to your Maker! Go to-night, father!"

Mr. Fernwell shrank in his bed at his son's vehemence; this was a new son, whom he could not understand. He spoke of horrible and unlikely things; but he spoke with an earnestness that was blood-curdling to an invalid.

"Stash it, Teddy!" he said, feebly, "I'm not strong enough to be preached at—and I'm not going off all in a hurry. I shall live years!"

"I will come again—I must see you very often, now."

"As often as *you* like! I bear you no malice, Teddy. Why, you were a good chap to come here."

"I am happier in my heart to-night than I have been for weeks!" said his son.

"Because I've got one leg instead of two, I suppose?" grumbled the variable father. "I don't see any thing else to have made you happy here."

"You did not kill that old man—he did not go to his God and charge you, of all men, with so black a deed!"

"No, he can't say that. Banks is in for it, and I'm out of that game, at any rate!"

"Hush!" cried Teddy. "Remember that this scheme for robbing your son was your suggestion, and that you are not innocent. Try and pray for forgiveness for all your wickedness to-night. Let me pray with you?"

"No, no," said Fernwell, with his nervous scream once

more, "I don't want any praying here. I have always got on well without it—I don't believe in it. I am sorry to see the fool they've made of you. I should think that I was going to die in earnest then, and I can't bear such an idea as that, Teddy. So don't pray!"

"I will be here to-morrow night!"

"Perhaps I shall be well enough to be moved by that time. If I could get out of this den into a more comfortable home, I should pick up wonderfully, and be able to stump about with a couple of damned crutches. And with you to mind me, why," with a short laugh, that he could not repress, despite his hypocrisy, "we might get to praying in time."

"Foxy Fernwell and his son Teddy taking to prayers together—by George! that's as fine a joke as we have had in Drag's Court lately—though there was a good deal of laughing over the operation," said Mr. Jackson, as he re-entered.

"Oh! don't, there's a good fellow," cried Fernwell. "Stop your foolery, and give me a glass of brandy."

"I am going now," said Teddy, rising. "I can do no farther good here. I will come to-morrow. Think of me, father," he said, laying his hand upon the shoulder of the prostrate thief; "think of me, who lived to regret a wicked life, and to escape from it by earnest efforts, faith, and prayer. Make one effort—just one—before it is too late."

"I'll make five hundred presently, with you to help me, Teddy. Come to-morrow and take pity on me, lying on this infernal gridiron all day, breathing foul air, and getting well so slowly!"

"I will come!"

Teddy departed, and Mr. Jackson set down the brandy-bottle at an unapproachable distance from the invalid, and followed the visitor up stairs. At the door opening into the court, Teddy and he stopped together.

"I am going to ask you for the truth—if you know it. Can he live?" said Teddy.

"Quite impossible."

"He carries death in his face; but I must have farther advice, despite him."

"Do as you like—but you couldn't have better than mine," was the conceited answer; "and you may bring the

police in, with your interference. I passed my examinations with credit—I am a M.R.C.S.—I was house-surgeon at — Hospital for a year and a half, and then women, and race-horses, and the devil!”

“It is easy to sink down,” said Teddy. “I am sorry for you—you should have known better with your chances, education, and position.”

“It’s odd to hear you,” said the other; “but I can’t stand it any more than your father could. It won’t do here.”

“I am not here to preach—I haven’t the gift,” said Teddy; “and I am only anxious now about my father. How long do you think he will live?”

“Oh! a week or a fortnight, with the brandy.”

“I shall see him alive again. So far as you can tell me, he will be alive to-morrow?”

“Not a doubt of that. He’ll die as hard as a badger.”

“Keep sober, and devote all the skill you have to him, and I will pay you handsomely. Prepare him, too, to see some one whom I can trust—who need not know the cause of his accident—who will not ask it.”

“I’ll do my best,” said the man, impressed by the promise of reward; “but you’d better be cautious, or you’ll hang your own father, mind.”

The two men parted—one to descend to the cellar and administer the necessary stimulant to Richard Fernwell, the other to emerge stealthily from Drag’s Court like a man whose actions were to be suspected yet, and on whose caution hung a life, that unworthy as it had ever been, yet seemed to him, in his craving to brighten it, a something more precious than his own.

CHAPTER IV.

UNDER SUSPICION.

TEDDY FERNWELL found himself with a giant’s task before him, but he set about it like a giant. The obstacles in his way; the up-hill nature of his labors; the poor return which might await him at the journey’s end, were not things to be considered, much less to daunt his energy.

Teddy felt strong to prosecute the task, but he did not

know how strong he really was. He never knew his own character thoroughly; in his intense unselfishness he never stopped to consider it. He was aware that there was little in the world to flinch at, and that he was prepared to meet all misfortunes—he thought only of misfortunes—with a patience that should keep him from sinking. His greatest struggle in life had been to confess to Martin his love for Christie, and then to go away and live apart from those who had been his truest friends. It was a trial; but he was prepared in the future for trials more severe; he was waiting for them; he believed that they would come. He was waiting for Martin to despise him for the old lie that had placed his brother Zach in Mrs. Henwood's charge; he was sure that he must acknowledge it, and that Martin would pass away from him completely. He felt that already there had come between him and his benefactor a something that was undefinable; and in his new interest for his father, and his desire to keep his father's hiding-place a secret, it seemed—if only seemed, it was sufficient—that he took opposite sides with the son of the man who died on watch at Henwood's. Then again there was to come—he was sure that the day was marked out, and it would face him presently—the loss of Christie's faith in him! *That* would naturally follow Christie's father's want of confidence; he should be alone in the world after that—shut away from them all as though he had a world to himself. He would keep strong, however, for they would be better without him, and he would live as best he might, doing the best in every way that he could. He might grow very hard in due course; but he should never shiver into fragments, to let the world see how weak he had been.

Teddy was thankful that his father had not struck the blow which had resulted in the death of old Charles Wynn. That took a weight from him, and rendered his task more grateful. He forgot every body and every thing for a while in his intense craving to render Richard Fernwell a better man before he died. With despair before him, he would not despair. He thought that he had been once as impervious to good impressions, and as deaf to good words as his father; and he hoped against hope with the patient whom he believed had not been thrown in his way without a purpose.

It was a great and a lofty plan to work out at the eleventh hour the new life for this sinner. Teddy did not know how it ennobled himself, for, as we have already intimated, he did not study himself very frequently.

His father evinced a certain amount of gratitude for the son's interest, odd, awkward and spasmodic—quenched very speedily by the current of daily events, and disturbed by dark thoughts of his own; but still in his weakness he was not utterly ungrateful, and Teddy flinched not from his task. He obtained a fortnight's leave of absence from Stanley and Burns, in order that he might devote the greater part of his time to his father—in order that no chance might be lost to save him. His persistence fatigued Mr. Fernwell certainly; Teddy saw that, for he was watchful, and he had the good sense to withdraw and go home to Upper Ground Street, in preference to wearying his father by advice to which he would not listen. Teddy, in the course of his study, seldom attempted to preach; he took indirect means of touching the heart, and appealing to the conscience of his father; he would draw him back to a pure train of thought by inducing him to speak of the days in Warwickshire, and before Warwickshire; when the father had a name worth treasuring, and possessed a few friends who believed in him; but Richard Fernwell would break away from such "maunderings," as he called them, and plead for brandy in exchange for the little Bible which Teddy read now and then to him, and which he allowed, under protest, and scoffed at afterward.

"It's no good coming that trick, Ted," he said, "it can't do with a fellow who never believed in it, and it's hard work to bear up with you in that character. You'd better go home and get my room ready. When we're comfortable together there—you and I—it may come round in time."

Mr. Fernwell was always looking forward—always putting off the hard task of the present hour. He was getting stronger, he assured every body who took the trouble to inquire after his health, and he certainly did look forward to "peace and quietness" with his son. Teddy shuddered at the fancy pictures Richard Fernwell drew sometimes—for he knew that his father would never see Upper Ground Street again—and endeavored to warn him of his state, to tell him in every way except the plain way—that he must

surely die. When his father grew weaker—but remained in mind more obdurate—he told him at last plainly; but Richard Fernwell still maintained his own opinion, and was not to be shaken by dismal prophecies.

“No one can tell how I feel except myself,” he said, “and I feel my strength coming back wonderfully. It’s no use worrying me with a heap of nonsense, or trying to make a fellow miserable, I tell you that I shall live to be a blessing to you. A one-legged blessing, Teddy—rather more of a comfort than an ornament. When will you see about the crutches for us?”

“There will be time enough,” said Teddy.

“The doctor will change his opinion, and recommend me a little walk about the room, and then—where the devil’s the crutches?” grumbled he; “and the first change I make is from this hole. It’s not well ventilated—it keeps a man back—and it’s not safe from the police.”

Mr. Richard Fernwell had one fear—that the police would find him out yet, and do their best to hang him for a crime that he had never committed. Heavens! if he should be hanged—he, as white as the driven snow, too. The evidence would be against him; Banks had taken himself off—many men had suffered for less, and as for his defense, the jury would not care a brass button for it!

Teddy had this fear, too, and it was rendered none the less acute by his father’s assertions. He was, therefore, cautious how he went to Drag’s Court, how he left it, and whom he took there. He took a physician there, as a forlorn hope—a man to whom he told a little of the truth, and who was touched by Teddy’s earnestness—and Mr. Jackson’s opinion having been indorsed by a higher authority, there remained no more to do but wait. Richard Fernwell had resented this visit, as had been anticipated; it had done more harm than good, also, as Mr. Jackson had prophesied, for Fernwell had blasphemed against every one and every thing the remainder of the day, and had to fight hard for his breath the day following.

And the days were numbered, and Teddy noted but a little change for the better, the faintest and the poorest, evidenced by a little rough thankfulness for a son’s interest and attention.

When the days were speeding onward to the end, and

Teddy had forgotten every thing in his new avocation, and was soul-absorbed in it, he met with Martin Wynn. Teddy saw Martin too late to avoid him, as he would have avoided him at that period, fearing questions to which he could not respond, and distrusting the motives which actuated the inquirer. Teddy was coming by a roundabout way to the Dials that morning, choosing the back streets and the labyrinth of "slums" in Drury Lane and its vicinity, to a straightforward course down St. Martin's Lane, where the probabilities of being recognized might retard his steps, if not offer a suspicion. And here, in a street of the lowest reputation, where honest folk were seldom to be met with, Teddy encountered Martin Wynn.

Martin came with long strides toward his *ci-devant* pupil, who changed color more than once. He caught Teddy by the arm, as a policeman might have held him in old times, and Teddy mustered courage to make the best of his case. He felt guilty in Martin's presence, and the nature of the cross-questioning that would be surely put to him filled him with dismay. Was the fear that he had had for so long coming with that wintry-looking morning, and would all be over between them after that day? He thought so by foreknowledge, and, as the color died out of his face for the last time, he was prepared for the worst.

"Teddy," said Martin, "I have been looking for you."

"Indeed, sir!"

"I called at your house last week—didn't they tell you?"

"No."

"I called yesterday again—and heard that you were seldom at home now; that you left early and came back late, sometimes not at all—what is the meaning of all this?"

Teddy did not see his way to a perspicuous answer, and so answered not.

"I think that I have a right to know," Martin urged, "for there is no one in the world, save Christie, in whom I take a greater interest. There, Teddy, I am grieved about you—you bother me—you have changed so much that you are beyond my comprehension. From the day that you left my house, taking offense too readily, I have not understood you."

"I took no offense, sir," said Teddy; "I did my duty by you at the eleventh hour, and—I went away."

"Since then—"

"Since then," interrupted Teddy, "I have not understood myself—that is all."

"You are unsettled. I hope that you are not desperate!"

"I hope not," answered Teddy; "try and think not—try and think the best of me, till I can explain more fully, sir. It will be fair and just."

Teddy had set his back against the wall, and Martin had imitated his example. Both men were looking moodily down at the pavement, rent in many places, and greasy with the mire.

"Would it not be more fair and just to tell me all at once?"

"I can't."

"You can't trust me?—what, after all these years, you are the first man to face me with that insult!"

Martin lost his temper somewhat here, for he had been trusted so implicitly, and looked up to so long, that he could not understand the nature of that motive which would keep a truth away from him.

"You are the last man, Martin Wynn, whom I would think of insulting," said Teddy, calmly; "the first of all the world whom I would trust. It is not want of confidence that keeps me silent."

"Why should there be a secret between us, if you are as honest as you were in my house?"

"I will ask you to believe that I am," said Teddy, proudly; "or to condemn your own teaching."

"Teddy, this is all nonsense—and sheer foolery!" cried Martin; "haven't I had enough to trouble me lately, without you? My father's death, and my father's murderer baffling a justice that demands him, and now you to go wrong, or to wrap yourself up in a paltry mystery that is unworthy of you."

Teddy might have confessed all, had not Martin spoken of his father's death, and had not the brow of the speaker contracted very much when he spoke of justice that was still searching for the criminal, and still baffled. His own father, Teddy thought, had but a day or two to live, and he must die in peace at any cost—even at the cost of Martin Wynn's respect.

He was silent therefore; the mystery must be kept, and he must remain under suspicion.

"I never thought that you would prove so stubborn," said Martin; "you have changed very much—you can not deny it. I don't say that you have gone back to evil—I can't think that, Teddy; but I am sure that you are not the man of whom I had such hopes."

Teddy felt the tears rise to his eyes, and again the impulse to tell all, and to trust to Martin, came to him. But he restrained it; it was as much as his father's life was worth, and it would not add to Martin's better thoughts of him. He was in direct opposition to the master—and there could not evolve from any explanations a better or a brighter atmosphere, he was assured. In a time not far distant, he could tell this story, and present himself in brighter colors—but not in that hour.

"Trust me!" he could only say again.

"You will not trust me—why expect trust in yourself?" asked Martin.

"Sir—I scarcely expect it."

"You have left Stanley and Burns?"

"For a little while."

"Suddenly—and unceremoniously, they tell me, when they were pressed very much for first-rate hands."

"I was forced to leave."

"Why forced?"

"I—I was compelled to go away for a week or two," said Teddy.

"You are still in London; you are not at home regularly; you were seen some time ago—I saw you—in a neighborhood as vile as this one; I find you in this place to-day. Teddy, I have but one hope—are you, like myself, in search of any one?"

"No."

Teddy's search was over, and he had found his father.

"If you would only acknowledge that you were in the wrong—have the boy's old faith in me—trust in my efforts to make things right—I might be of service to you. But when you shun me, and seek such places as these, I must suspect that you are falling away from good—that in these streets there is advancing to you a temptation that you may not have the power to resist."

"No, sir—there is no temptation before me."

"Are you a better judge of that than I?" said Martin; "you have been weak."

"Weak enough to love Christie, you mean," replied Teddy, coloring; "right, sir, I have been very weak."

"I did not mean that. I did not require any allusion to *her* name from you—I must not have that now."

Teddy was suspected; he could not even clear away that suspicion by a full confession, and he took the sentence which was implied by Martin Wynn's words. He *was* prepared for it, and he bore up well. Too well, for Martin saw only hardness of demeanor in his opposition.

"Your actions are dark, and you will not throw a light upon them," said Martin. "I can but think that you are falling into sin. Sometimes I have an awful thought that you have found your father—that your father might have been once more tempted by the wealth at Henwood's Wharf—that, my God! he might have killed mine! Teddy, if I thought that you took his part against me—I should curse you!"

Teddy fought hard for firmness now; it was the life of his father, perhaps, for which he fought. He must keep strong, and Martin Wynn was nothing then in the balance. In the good time the story in a different light, not now. He took his father's part, and he must turn from this man.

"I can bear no more, Mr. Wynn," said he. "I have not the time, and it suits not my inclination to be condemned yet a while. I have not always acted fairly by you—there, I own that!—but at least I am not deserving of your curse, and I am forever, sir, and for all that you have done to me, intensely grateful."

"I can never trust you again."

"So be it, sir."

"I can never see you again. If you go away like this, hard, unmoved, the man I never expected to find in you, all the doubts that I have fought against for your sake must be strengthened."

"I may not deserve them all, sir; but I shall never be near you to explain them away."

"Deserving of some, then?"

"Yes."

"You own this—and only a few minutes since you asked me to trust you!"

"To trust me in my present step—yes."

"Then—"

"But I can hear no more," cried Teddy. "I am content to live apart from you. Long since I knew that you would lose all hope in me, and I have fought against my better knowledge. There, let me go—think the worst of me," he added, passionately, "but let me go!"

"For the last time," adjured Martin, standing in his way, "I offer you my help to lead you back, to comfort you in this new trouble. Will you take it?"

"I can not."

"Then I must part with you forever. From to-day will come never a wish to see or hear from you again. We go our separate ways in life—we two who trusted in each other—and there's an end to every thing between us."

"An end to every thing—yes, it has come!" said Teddy. "Well, God bless you for the faith you have had, for it led me right and kept me true! No after, darker thoughts of yours can stand between me and my Savior!"

Whether Martin heard any of these words or not is doubtful; they were marred by a huskiness of voice, and a rapidity of utterance, and before they were concluded, Teddy had darted into the roadway, and was tearing at a headlong pace down the street. Teddy finished his sentence to himself as he ran away like a madman, leaving Martin Wynn still bewildered on the pavement.

CHAPTER V.

TEDDY IS COMFORTED.

TEDDY found his way to Drag's Court, and was rewarded for all past efforts by a volley of abuse from his estimable parent.

Mr. Fernwell had begun to regard Teddy's presence as a necessity; to feel uncomfortable in his son's absence, even doubtful of the motive which might detain him, for the father would remain suspicious to the last. When Teddy was keeping him company, he did not doubt the son, only away from him did an ungenerous mind become full of distrust. But Teddy at his side now was to make a different man of

him at times, to bring to the surface a gleam or two of a better nature. It was a new thing to be an object of interest; to be treated kindly; to hear kind words; to be promised a roof over his head, and a son to study him, should he recover, which he was sure to do, despite all the doleful prophecies that had been hurled at him.

He had been looking forward to an early visit from Teddy that day; Teddy had promised to call early and read to him, and Mr. Jackson, on the strength of that promise, had taken a day's leave. Then Teddy had not come so early as he might have done, and Mr. Fernwell having thought hard, and thought himself out of temper, launched his anathemas at his son as he came in from the daylight.

Teddy did not respond at once; he took a chair by his father's side, and waited patiently till the reproaches were concluded.

"I will tell you what detained me," he said, at last, "and what I have done for you."

"Done for me!" growled Fernwell. "Nobody ever did any thing for me!"

"I have given up my best friend!—the best friend that a man could have!"

"Who is he?"

"Martin Wynn."

"You—you haven't told him any thing about me?"

"No."

Teddy related his story, and Mr. Fernwell listened with interest, till he found that its details were not exactly after his taste.

"And a good riddance of as meddlesome a beggar as was ever out of the black-coat-and-white-choker business," said Mr. Fernwell; "if it hadn't been for him, you and I and Zach might have been in easy circumstances by this time."

"There, we need not regret that past," interrupted Teddy; "I should not have been here, taking care of you."

"How do you know where you would have been?" growled his father, "and what is the good of talking like this. We're nearly out of brandy, and that's a topic more congenial to my present frame of mind. I'm awfully thirsty, Teddy."

"Presently, you shall have brandy. Keep quiet now."

"I don't want any of that Bible-dodge to-day—I won't

have it," said Mr. Fernwell quickly, "you should have come at proper hours if you wanted to pitch that stuff at me. I can't have my time wasted like this—I want amusing. Why don't you amuse a fellow when he asks you!"

Teddy shut up his little Bible with a sigh, and returned it to its place near his father's pillow—where it always lay unopened, till Teddy attempted to awaken an interest in its holy lessons.

"I can't amuse you to-day," he said, "my heart's heavy."

"You never are amusing now," complained Mr. Fernwell; "I remember the time when you were more like a kitten than any thing else—aggravating enough, but making people die of laughing at your tricks. I never laughed much at them, for I never was fond of laughing, but you might give us one or two jokes now, instead of one or two texts, and see how they would answer."

"Not to-day," said Teddy wearily.

"Can't you sing something? Great heaven! have you forgotten all those patter songs you were so fast with once? There was a song with a jig to it—a toe-and-heel jig—why don't you try something in that line?"

"Time, and place, and inclination all against me," said Teddy; "how do you feel to-day?"

"Stronger—stronger, Ted," was the reply, "only infernally thirsty. Can't you make a fellow a little weak brandy and water—or won't you?"

"I will make it at once."

"There's a good fellow," said Mr. Fernwell; "that's what I call filial affection—bless you, Teddy. We shall get on together in time, and understand each other. I look forward to the days in Upper Ground Street—though it's a devilish low neighborhood, mind you—and the comfort that I shall be to you, keeping house for you while you are at business, and getting the pipes and grog ready by the time you come back. What heaps of things we shall have to talk about!—why, my life has been as good as a play, only, of course, it wouldn't have done to relate it before. But now—no secrets from each other."

"My life has been as good as a play too," said Teddy, passing over the nourishment for which his father had inquired, "a play with a good moral in it."

"Oh! damn the moral."

"I'll tell you a little of it now—it may amuse you."

"I hope it may, but I am not sanguine. Nice and weak and washy you've made this mixture, Teddy. If I wasn't so thirsty I'd pitch it at you, glass and all!"

"I'm going to tell you how Martin Wynn set about my reformation."

"Go on. I'm all attention."

Mr. Fernwell handed back the empty glass, and then curled himself in his bedclothes, and shut his eyes. In a few minutes he was asleep, but Teddy went on with his narrative, as though it amused himself, or brought with it, thus delivered, some consolation for all that had happened to him that day. He became silent at last, however, and sat looking at his father's ghastly face, fancying that it had altered, and become more sunken since yesterday. He had given up Martin Wynn for that man; he had repaid Martin's kindness by deceit, and preferred ingratitude to interest. A strange choice, but still his father—through it all, and before all, a father who, by a miracle, might be brought to a sense of his position, but who seemed impervious to common remedies. A terrible failure, this mission of his, thought Teddy; his father harder that day than he had been hitherto—and more defiant. Confident in living many years, and but a few days left him at the best. He prayed that some signs of penitence might ensue before the last, but he doubted as he prayed. This was a man who had gone wrong by choice almost, who had been very vile and treacherous through life, and who would die as he had lived.

He was praying when his father woke, and asked for brandy again; more than once that day, Teddy silently sitting there, watching the sick man's fitful snatches at sleep, prayed within himself for one chance to do good to this benighted soul. It was in his hands, or no man's. A clergyman would have had no chance here, for he would have been ignorant of the case—only one who knew Richard Fernwell, then, and who had known him at his worst, could expect even a patient hearing, and even he was waiting still in vain.

Teddy remained with his father all day. In the evening Mr. Jackson returned, received money from Teddy, promised to take every care of Mr. Fernwell, "who," he added,

"was not looking so bright as he could have wished to see him that day."

"How can I look bright with that fellow wanting to talk me out of my mind about things which he don't understand?" replied Mr. Fernwell to this; "he has been at it all day, Jackson. There, send him off, and let you and me have a game at cribbage till I feel more sleepy. I wonder why I am so wide awake to-night?"

"Nerves," said Jackson, laconically.

"And he's been preying on them!—now, that's too bad. I feel all eyes, Jackson—round, staring, fiery eyes, that feel as if they'd never shut again. It's a great nuisance, Jackson—it might tell against me getting better, if it kept on."

"Good-night, father—I am going now."

"Oh! good-night to you. Come in a better temper another time, or stop away."

Teddy did not reply. He bade Mr. Jackson good-night, and went away to Upper Ground Street. He went away with a gloomy countenance enough, for his heart was heavy. He had lost hope in his task—lost a fair hope and a good friend, both in a day. With every step he took the consciousness of going farther and farther away from all in whom he was interested, forced itself upon him—the Wynns, Zach, now his own father! He should soon reach the end of his journey now; presently he should be at the top of the hill standing all alone on its summit, with the northeaster dead against him, and a wild stretch of tableland before him. That would be his world for good, where he would have to try the hard task of reconciling himself—to himself!

He opened the street door with his key, and went up stairs. He never locked his room door; he placed every confidence in his fellow-lodgers, like a man whose world had been an honest one, with no one to distrust therein. He passed at once into his sitting-room, and then stood aghast and trembling, as well he might stand.

For sitting at the table, waiting for him patiently, as though they had a right to wait, were Christie Wynn and her aunt Polly. The candle-lamp was on the table, and had been burning for two hours there—for two hours these women had waited for the wanderer's return. Teddy was bewildered at the figures sitting there in their dark mourn-

ing, and could not reconcile their presence with any thing that had happened that day.

Both rose as he entered, and came toward him, impelled by the one thought that had brought them there; then the younger of the two dropped suddenly behind the other, and Polly came on alone, and put her arms round him in the motherly way that she had done once or twice before in life, when he needed cheering words.

"I come to say I trust you, Teddy. Whatever it is that turns you from us now, I come to say *I* trust you!"

Teddy was not proof against this action; he clasped her tightly in his arms, and kissed her. He remained silent, and breathing hard, struggling with all his might not to give way like a woman.

"God bless you for your trust!" he said, hoarsely—"I will deserve it, Miss Polly, ever after this!"

"We come to say we trust you," corrected Polly, as she left his embrace, and energetically waved her hands to Christie—"we don't give up our woman's faith so easily."

"I thank you very much," murmured Teddy, holding out both hands to Christie, and shaking them in his own; "this makes amends for all that has gone before, or that there is to follow. You have faith in me, then?—*you* believe that I haven't gone wrong?"

"Yes, I believe it," answered Christie, "for it is not like you—you, who have been always strong, unselfish, and gentle."

"Good words—too good for me," said Teddy; "but they make me very happy. *He* knows that you have both come?"

"Yes."

"Sit down, please," entreated Teddy, placing the chairs for his visitors again, taking a chair himself before them, and dropping into it, all eagerness; "he is sorry for the hard words of this morning?—he sends you here, both of you, to say that he withdraws them?"

He turned to Polly Wynn, as though he constituted her spokeswoman for the occasion; he knew that he could look her in the face with less embarrassment. But Polly Wynn had a will of her own just then, and a plan of her own for Teddy's comfort; she turned at once to Christie.

"Christie, it's you to tell him all. You know more of this—he would rather hear you speak, I know."

Christie blushed at this, even trembled for a moment. Then she took courage, and faced this eccentric lover of hers—faced him with all her beauty, and all that earnestness which added another charm to it.

"Teddy, he does not withdraw them," she said; "for he is hurt by your want of confidence in him; and he believes, against his own good thoughts, that you have altered very much. I—we two women—have taken your part to-night, for we have heard all the story, and we would face you ourselves with one question."

"He sent you?"

"No." But he did not ask us to keep away; he did not seek to thwart those wishes which bring us again to the old home."

"And the old friend," added Polly.

"And the old friend who will not be stern and cold with us."

"One question," said Teddy; "well, what is it?" He compressed his lips, and turned very pale. The past suspicions, the doubts that Martin Wynn had had of him, would all rise up anew, and that day of trouble would never have an end. This was the climax, after all—and then the curtain on the Wynns forever.

"Only one question, Teddy," appealed Christie, "that you can answer, looking us in the face, and not down at the floor like that."

Teddy looked up at once.

"We ask you, then—we who care not about your secrets, women as we are—whether you are a better or worse man than when you lived with us in Griffin Street, or with Aunt Polly and my grandfather? You have altered one way or another, Teddy—you are not the same."

"It is a strange question to put to me," said Teddy; "and it is very hard to answer."

"He says that you are falling away from right. For the first time in my life," she cried, with excitement, "I say that he is wrong!"

"Thank you, Christie," murmured Teddy; "spoken like a woman, without a thought of the evil in the world, or without much worldly knowledge."

"I have a knowledge of your character—that is, I think I have," she corrected; "and I ask you for a simple answer."

"With every day a man must become worse, for he is a miserable sinner," groaned Teddy; "why should I have become a better man? I can not answer this—I do not see my way to a clear answer."

Christie sighed; and from the woman near her echoed a faint wail, as if over the hopes that had brought them there. Teddy was roused by their sadness, by the doubts which might be rising here too, for all their past assertions. He was about to speak again, when Christie said,

"Many men and women become more good with every day, and you we hoped would do so with the rest. Oh! Teddy, we had such faith in you—for you were very different to all men, contented, grateful for a little, and anxious—we all saw it—to do good."

"I am trying to do good now. If to set myself aside and live for others is to be a better man than I was months ago—if to strive for another's better life at the expense of my own is not to fall away," cried Teddy, "I am that man, and I ask you—only you, Christie!—to keep your faith in me!"

He did not know that he could speak up for himself until that moment, speak of himself and his good works with so much boldness; he was off his guard, and had perhaps betrayed his secret; but it was the woman he loved who had come to ask him to let her think the best of him still. He could not let her go away with the impression that he was a poor unstable wretch, turned from good by a temptation that he had not the strength to fight against! Let Martin Wynn believe that, but not his daughter!

"There! *there!*" cried Christie, clapping her hands, crying, laughing, and clapping her hands again; "I told him so, but he *would* keep firm—he," she added, a little indignantly, "who should have known you better than we did. We wish to hear no more—we are content—we will go away rejoicing, as over a brother restored to us!"

"Don't go yet," said Teddy, suddenly; "you may as well hear the worst of me now, and tell your father the worst. I have—I have said too much. I have been to all of you not exactly the man you fancied—I have been penitent, earnest in my efforts to live down an evil past, but I have lived with a lie at my heart, and I could not for my brother's sake confess a deceit that I had practiced on your father. God

forgive me, but wrong as it may have been, I do not regret it!"

"What do you mean?" gasped Christie.

"Tell your father to-night, that in my efforts to reawaken his interest in my brother—to give Zach one chance to rise from darkness—I lied with all my might. Zach, poor fellow, was not worthy of your father's good words with Mrs. Henwood—he was very, very unworthy—and I tried hard to deceive the man who saved me afterward."

"*This*—this when you were a boy?—when you first came to Griffin Street?"

"Yes."

"But this was in the dark estate from which my dear father saved you. You did not know right from wrong then. This belongs to many years ago, and it will not stand between you and my father now."

"I never told him. I could not tell him. I degrade my brother now, like a coward, by this avowal."

"It is never cowardly to acknowledge a fault, Teddy," said Christie; "and we will not have the darkness of the past back on us. We have had the answer which we came to seek, and we are happy to receive it. We see the end of all this—and it is very bright. You will have courage?"

"I will have courage," repeated Teddy.

"And patience?"

"Ah! and patience, too," answered he; "for you do not turn away, and I have told you the worst of me. You bring me back a gleam of sunshine, and it will never desert me after this. If your father doubt me, as he has a right—if you forget me—if I never, never set eyes on you again—and it is more than likely—still the sunshine shall be there, and I will thank God for it!"

"But if the day should come—and it is more than likely," she cried, quoting Teddy's words, and adding an emphasis of her own; "when all the clouds have passed away, and—"

"I will not look forward to the future, Miss Christie," said Teddy; "I never was much of a castle-builder. Fresh doubts may arise—though if I can keep them down, I will. I will try with all my might," he cried in his old hearty tones, that told of the good which this visit had done him;

"and if I fail, remember that there will ever be some light left with me."

It was left with him at least that night; when they had gone away, and he was a lonely man again, it shed a radiance in that up-stairs room, and added a brightness to his face. It made the present more than bearable—for he had told of his past deceit, and they to whom he had confessed had seen in it but his self-denial. If they were but women—prone to forgive—looking with womanly pity at man's errors, and judging not as men would have judged him—still they were women whom he loved, and one was like an angel to him. She forgave him; she kept her FAITH in him. Like an angel, also, in being forever far above his earthly wishes; he felt the separation between them that night more than ever, and yet he felt more happy!

"It only wanted Christie's faith to give me strength again," he murmured, as though his strength had almost failed him until then, which it had not. "Nothing new or strange to come and take me from the beaten path!"

The door opened as he spoke, and Teddy turned in his chair and looked toward the door, and at the figure entering with a pale, excited face, that scared him with a something new and strange at once.

"Zach," he said, "what can have brought you to see me?"

CHAPTER VI.

MR. FERNWELL CONSIDERS HIMSELF AN INJURED MAN.

"WHAT could have brought you to see me?"

It sounded like a reproach to Zach as he entered, and he accepted it as one, albeit Teddy had only expressed his honest surprise. The last man to honor the home in Upper Ground Street was the man who had risen from the masses, and whose virtues had not expanded with his rapid ascent.

"Spare me, Teddy," he said, as he advanced, "if I have not been the best of brothers. I come to make amends at last."

"To make amends?" quoted Teddy; "I don't think that is needed."

"Perhaps to make you rich, old fellow," he said in a lower tone—"to raise you with myself."

"Very kind of you," was the dry reply; "but I am saving money, as well as paying my way."

"But to make you rich," he said; "to give you power to help yourself and your friends; to place you above the petty wages of the handicraftsman."

"The honorable wages of the English workman," corrected his brother. "Well, sit down, Zach. To help myself and friends is not a thing to be despised—teach me to be as fond of money as you are, and in the future you will see how grateful I am."

"You are satirical. This is not fair—this is unlike you."

"Pardon me—you are right. It is unlike me; but I am unlike myself to-night. I feel very happy—all the good news is streaming in at once, and the daylight comes up more and more to brighten a man who has been very dull lately. I am glad to see you—sit down."

Teddy placed a chair for his brother, and then said,

"Sit down, Zach, and make yourself as comfortable as you can."

"Time is precious with me just now, and this is but a halting-stage on a journey which we will both make together. Teddy, we must find our father."

Teddy looked hard at Zach, but did not answer.

"You and I must find him," said Zach, in an eager whisper. "I have been searching for him all the last week, but I have not your knowledge of the streets, and at every turn I am baffled."

"What do you want with him?"

"To make him rich also."

"He is past all riches," answered Teddy; "he is dying."

"Ah!—who told you? Have you found him out? Was he connected with that robbery? Did he kill old Charles Wynn? I thought that you knew all, and I came on to you."

"You are to be trusted with your father's life, I suppose?" said Teddy, in not too complimentary a fashion. "It affects your interests, and your name, Zach! Well, I have found him out—he was connected with the robbery—he did not kill poor Wynn."

"I must see him at once."

"I don't think that it is necessary," said Teddy, "it may excite him. He is very weak now. He does not speak of you with—any—great degree of kindness."

"I must see him. It is more necessary than ever, for all our interests, that I should see him."

"What is this story, Zach?"

"I will tell you the facts as we proceed. We have been robbed all our lives by the Henwoods—our mother was not disinherited."

Teddy did not betray any great astonishment at this; the news was startling, but he was thinking of his father's weakness, and how Zach's presence would affect his father. The money did not trouble him, but he became possessed with the idea that a meeting between Zach and his father would do good—that such a meeting, at such a time, would be better for them both. The man who had been at war with the world all his life, might like to die in peace with his children. He began to think, also, that Zach's presence might make an impression upon his father, if Zach concealed his selfishness better than he did at present. He would give him a lesson as they walked to Drag's Court. The days were hastening on, and his father was no better. It was necessary to be decisive in their movements.

"We will go at once," Teddy said.

They left the house, and went along Upper Ground Street together, both somewhat thoughtful. Zach had been taken aback by his brother's demeanor, and was at a loss—with all his shrewdness—to see clearly to the depths of Teddy's character. He had not taken any trouble to understand his brother lately; he had admired him in his heart, and he had felt that Teddy was honest, industrious, and independent; but on that night he was puzzled. He could not understand a nature wholly unselfish—a heart that would not thrób with delight at the prospect of worldly advantages. His soul had become so narrowed in pursuit of riches; he had lost so much faith in humanity by his hard bargains, his commissions, his huckstering on the dirty back stairs of commerce, that money had become his god, and he had given up every thing for it—even his own health. He had other faults and failings, poor Zach! but money-worship was the foremost sin, and it brought others in its train, by the natural law of covetousness.

Zach had been inclined, till he had met with Teddy, to think that he was about to play the hero—lifting his brother from the dregs of society, as it were, and placing him nearer to himself. His own interests were Teddy's, certainly; but Teddy should be none the less indebted for all Zach's efforts to bring about their common welfare. To do him justice, he was glad that Teddy's chance had come at last—for the fragments of the boy's wild love clung to him yet, and kept him from becoming wholly despicable. He considered that he had been troubled, bored by those thoughts of Teddy Fernwell, that would intrude upon him even in his golden dreams—but it never struck him that those thoughts had done him any good.

He was not even aware that he felt better in Teddy's society, that he went back many years in thought when he was with him. He was sure that he felt uncomfortable, almost miserable, for days afterward—that was all.

When they were free of Upper Ground Street, and were crossing Waterloo Bridge toward the Dials, Zach recounted the history of the family chances, drawing for Teddy's edification a glowing picture of the brother's future. We need not make closer allusion to that history in this place—farther on in our chapter it will have to be again sketched forth, and sailing on toward our FINIS we have not space for "vain repetitions."

Zach was more surprised than ever at his brother's stolidity; it could not be natural, he thought, only an admirable piece of acting that almost deceived him. He had had no idea till then, that Teddy possessed those powers of self-command. Perhaps this Teddy overdid his coolness, Zach thought also, when the brother laid his hand upon his arm, and said,

"Let me advise you as to the best method of meeting your father. Say as little of the past as you can, and tell your story as briefly as possible. You will be shocked at the change in him."

"Very likely," said Zach. He could be very cool on that topic; he was a man not easily shocked by suffering, at least.

"And if you should not feel too great an interest in him," suggested Teddy, after a moment's hesitation, "feign it for once. Let us on his death-bed spare his feelings as much as possible."

"To be sure," said Zach; "I am not the man to wound his feelings."

They made no farther allusion to Mr. Fernwell, Mrs. Henwood, or themselves, after that. They were silent together as they proceeded side by side through the maze of Drury Lane streets, wherein Teddy earlier that day had encountered Martin Wynn. A day ever memorable for him, crowded with incidents out of the common way, and tending to change him and his life. A day that seemed as though it would never end.

"Eleven o'clock," said Teddy, as they turned into Drag's Court; "I hope that we shall not disturb him too much."

"Here!—in this place!" ejaculated Zach; "is it safe?"

"For the Fernwells—quite safe."

Into the house—the door standing ajar, as usual, for the convenience of numerous lodgers, many of whom were in the habit of coming home in a hurry with *small parcels*—and proceeding by cautious steps down the creaking staircase.

"It's as black as night," said Zach; "don't go on so fast."

Teddy Fernwell was already at the door of the room, or cellar, and knocking softly with his knuckles.

"Who's there?" cried Mr. Jackson, from within.

"Teddy."

Mr. Jackson unlocked the door the moment afterward, and appeared in his shirt-sleeves with a candle in his hands.

"Thundering sick of your governor I'm getting, and no mistake," he said tetchily—he had been out all day, and was tired, and not quite sober; "the old beggar has been fainting now—as if that was any good—and I've had trouble enough for sixty to bring him round again!"

"We will come to-morrow," said Teddy, keeping Zach back with one arm extended behind him.

"Is that you, Teddy?" shouted Mr. Fernwell, in far from a feeble key; "here, I want you. Come in—come in—and don't mind this fellow's lies; there's no more sleep for me to-night. I'm all right—I only want amusing till I come round again."

"I bring a friend with me."

"The devil you do! No friend of mine, at least. Kick him out, Jackson!"

"A friend of yours, too," said Teddy; "my brother Zach."

"Kick him to the uttermost limits of earth!" cried Mr. Fernwell; "I'll have nothing to do with the scamp ever again!"

"I bring good news," said Zach, quickly; "independence and a high position for you."

"He's come after the reward!—he thinks I killed old Wynn!—I know what he means by a *high* position, the scamp!"

Teddy entered the room, followed by Zach. It was the quicker method of pacifying his father.

Mr. Jackson was already attempting it.

"You'll do it in a minute, old man," he asserted; "you'll break every thing you've got, and off you'll go!"

"You be—"

"Father," said Teddy, quickly advancing, "I ask you to lie still, and listen patiently to the news that your son has brought. It is strange, but good news. It places us all in a different position from to-night."

"To think that *he* should bring good news!"

"He brings regrets also for your present state, for much harshness on his side, engendered by much unfairness on your own. He would forget the past," said Zach.

"Ah! you're up to something that I don't see clearly yet," he said, softening a little; "you may get over Teddy—for he's a fool in some things—but you will not *do* me!"

"Will you listen to me?"

"It will be a change—it may be amusing," remarked Mr. Fernwell.

Zach looked hard at Mr. Jackson, who was putting on his coat, and making himself presentable for company. Mr. Jackson looked back at him.

"This is a family matter, sir," said Zach.

"And you want me to go? Very well—your family's been the curse of my life—and I have had more than enough of it."

"You've been paid for it, haven't you?" grumbled Mr. Fernwell, "what have *you* got to make a noise about? Mayn't a man faint if he likes without all this row?"

"Ah! you're a nice man," remarked Mr. Jackson, dryly; "if you had not been a pal of mine, and you weren't so very

hard up just now, I would not have taken care of you. You're the most ungrateful beast I ever met!"

And with this final and complimentary verdict, Mr. Jackson retired.

Zach and Teddy took their seats near Mr. Fernwell's bedside, Zach looking very hard at his father. He had not seen much of sickness or suffering; his life had been cast in pleasant places; he had not looked on death advancing since he was a child, and his mother gave up the ghost at Henwood's; but he was assured that that face—ghastly and haggard in the candlelight—was the face of a man whose hours were numbered. For an instant a chill fell upon him, and kept him silent; the face daunted him, and the fiery eyes glared wildly and in an unfatherly fashion at him. He might have been more unmanned, had not the importance of his mission there suggested the chances that he might lose if he were not more speedy.

He was about to dash into the subject, when his father stopped him.

"Teddy knows all about this?"

"Yes."

"Then let him tell it," said Fernwell; "I understand him better than you. I have become used to his voice, and yours I do not care to hear."

"We will not bear malice in our hearts," said Teddy; "we sink the past, and meet together here, father and sons."

"Teddy may tell this story, if he likes," said Zach.

"I do not care about it," said Teddy; "tell him yourself, Zach, and be as brief as you can."

Teddy turned his large eyes toward his father, and kept a careful watch upon him. Zach began—

"Our troubles commenced when you were without friends, and had run away with mother. My mother's father died, and left a will, cutting off my mother from all share in those estates for which you married her."

"Plainly put. Well, for which I married her—I grant that."

"He was sorry for his child—and her position with you troubled him very much at last. He had ascertained that you were sinking fast enough from right, and she with you, and we with both of you. He took another resolve, in a mad kind of fashion, to conceal a deed—an important deed

—in a secret drawer of a cabinet. The Henwoods are all mad in their way. He told his wife of this document—my grandmother—he left a letter also with it, wherein it was stated that she was to use her judgment concerning the deed of gift; if you had repented ever so little, or if there was a chance for my mother, or for us, it was to be shown—if not, to be destroyed. All this left to the discretion of his wife, who was a woman of the world, and a woman of common sense.”

“She never gave me a good word,” whined Mr. Fernwell, as though that fact did not bear testimony to her sense, at any rate, “but go on—go on.”

“Then my grandmother died first, and Mr. Henwood died soon afterward, leaving that deed intact, in the cabinet.”

“Eh!—and it exists—and what is in it? Teddy, I—I—I think I’ll have some brandy, and not so much water with it this time.”

Teddy hastened to provide the stimulant; it was necessary on this occasion. Mr. Fernwell was unduly excited; his hands were clutching the counterpane, which he drew up to his bristly chin; his shaggy eyebrows were working up and down, as though by clock-work; his eyes were restless and full of fire.

“Patience, father!” said Teddy, “or I must stop this.”

“G—go—go on.”

His teeth rattled against the glass which his son held to his lips; he could scarcely drink the liquid that had been tendered him.

“The deed conveyed part of his property—that is, the estates in Warwickshire, valued at sixty thousand pounds—to us.”

“Hurrah! it comes at last, the turn of luck for which I sold my soul years ago—I knew it somehow—I felt that it would come—that I was not always to drag on a pauper’s life—and the deed, Zach? Good Zach, best of young fellows, and sharp as the devil himself!—you found it, you say?”

“No—I do not say that. It was destroyed by Mrs. Henwood.”

“De—destroyed!”

“Burnt.”

Mr. Fernwell launched his empty glass at “good Zach’s”

head at once, and Zach was fortunate enough to dip his head in time, and let the glass shiver to fragments against the opposite wall. A torrent of oaths escaped the father's lips; he seemed about to make an effort to struggle up in bed, when Teddy's strong hand kept him in his place.

"Steady—you have not heard the rest," said the elder son in his ear.

"I knew he couldn't come here for any good!" cried Mr. Fernwell—"that he wanted to buoy me up, and then dash me down with his accursed climax—it's just like him. It's all to torture me, and drive me mad, or kill me. He wants me dead—I see it in his eyes."

"I will proceed—I have brought good news, I tell you," reasserted Zach.

"I don't see it—I don't see it," moaned Mr. Richard Fernwell.

"The story is soon finished, and then we can confer upon the facts. Mrs. Henwood—"

"She ought to be hanged!—I hope to God that she'll be hanged!" gasped the father—"to take other people's money away from them—it's infamous!"

Zach waited for his father's greater composure, then he commenced anew—

"Mrs. Henwood destroyed the deed, but not before a copy of it had been taken by her daughter."

"Why didn't she burn the copy?—who was fool enough to give her the original?"

"A romantic girl, or a fool of a woman—my wife."

"She ought to be hanged too."

"Will you allow me to proceed without these interruptions?" asked Zach, more sharply—"reserve your comments till the end. I object to this course."

He was losing his temper; he had been accustomed to command so long, to expound, and to be reverentially listened to, that he could not brook this constant interference without a protest against its impropriety. Mr. Richard Fernwell received it with a calmness that even Zach did not anticipate; he was secretly anxious to discover in what way the chance of riches still remained for him and his—especially for him!

"Go on, Zach—you mean well after all, I see. You come here for the sake of the father—an injured man, robbed of

his property by wholesale—fallen among thieves, poor fellow!" he cried; "go on—how can we get rich, we three, and overreach that dreadful woman?"

"I will explain. Are you listening, Teddy?"

"I have not lost a word," was the answer.

Teddy was looking steadily before him, full of thought rather than of interest. The variations that had evolved from this story had not affected him; even when his father had thrown the glass at Zach, he had quietly risen, and whispered his injunctions; and those injunctions having been attended to, he had dropped into his place again, and assumed the same grave looks.

Zach went on—

"The letter written by Mrs. Henwood's father is still in existence; the copy of the deed of gift we have; one of the witnesses to that deed, a very old man, is living still—it has cost me fifty pounds to find him—Mrs. Henwood will not deny the destruction of that document, and is a woman too weak to bear up against an inquiry of this nature."

"It's a poor case—we sha'n't get a half-penny!" whined the father.

"If it be necessary to go to law, we shall assuredly obtain our rights," said Zach, firmly.

"Yes, we ought to have our rights," affirmed Mr. Fernwell; "you'll excuse me interrupting you again, my dear boy, but we are entitled to our rights, decidedly. Still, the law's infernally uncertain, though I can swear to any thing, you know, if a good witness is required. Zach," he cried, more eagerly, "why should not I say that the old man always promised me a fortune with his daughter?"

"This will not do," said Teddy, turning almost fiercely to his father; "don't brood on fresh duplicity at so late an hour as this. Think how near you may be to the end of your life!—oh! why won't you think?"

"This fellow is half a preacher, Zach," said Fernwell, ironically—"that Martin Wynn melted him into a good boy, and softened his brain in the process. Don't brood on fresh duplicity, indeed! by heaven! hasn't the woman at Wimbledon played me false—ruined me—kept me a beggar for no end of years?"

"Raised Zach from beggary to independence, giving him indirectly the money back—yes."

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"I raised myself," said Zach, sternly; "she would have kept me to a petty clerkship, or cast me off, if the whim had suited her—I owe no gratitude to Mrs. Henwood."

"It is not worth arguing about now," was Teddy's careless reply; "it is getting late, and our father is tired."

"Not a bit," asserted Mr. Fernwell; "that's another lie of yours, Teddy. I'm only a little short of breath, and rather chilly—that's all. There was too much water with that brandy, and it has struck cold to my inside. Now, Zach, about the law of this!"

He gave a tug to the counterpane and drew it beneath his chin, shivering as he spoke. The long wasted fingers—more like the claws of a bird than bearing a resemblance to human hands—were interlaced together, and cracked and snapped occasionally with their rigidity of clasp. The face peering above the coverlet was all eagerness and greed.

"About the law," repeated Zach. "I know enough of Mrs. Henwood's character to be assured that my partner will not go to law; that she will agree to any sacrifice rather than have an exposure of this case. Fortunately for us, she is not a strong-minded woman."

"Good!" gasped Mr. Fernwell.

"Teddy and I will call upon her—that is already arranged between us—state our case, and make our claim," said Zach.

"Not forgetting interest on the money," cried Fernwell.

"We will waive interest if the matter can be settled between our solicitors," said Zach; "and content ourselves with twenty thousand pounds apiece. A fair sum, and not to be despised."

"Teddy agrees to this?" said Fernwell, looking at his eldest son.

"Teddy agrees," responded he.

"What a glorious stroke of luck!" cried Mr. Fernwell exultantly; "the Fernwells rising at last to greatness—all of a bunch, too—the act-drop falling on a blaze of triumph. If I had only known this twelve months ago, I—"

He paused and looked doubtfully at Zach, who concluded his sentence for him.

"Would not have attempted to rob my wharf. Well, I return good for evil. I forgive the past."

"We'll forgive one another," said Mr. Fernwell; "for I have had a grievance as well as you. You did not act on the square with me, and I—hated you very much. What's that?"

Zach was unfolding a paper that he had produced from the breast-pocket of his coat.

"This is a document which I wish to read to you, and which requires your signature."

"What is it?"

"Your will," was the cool reply.

Mr. Fernwell took a long breath at this. His eyebrows lowered so much that they concealed his glittering eyes for a while, and he suffered still more from that shortness of breath against which he had already protested.

"There's time enough for that," he said at last.

"Every precaution is necessary in a case of this kind," said Zach, in a business kind of manner; "you will not die an hour the sooner for a signature that will save your sons much trouble."

"I can write my own will, thank you," was the dogged answer.

"If you die without a will, we shall have considerable difficulty," said Zachary; "now it is the mere matter of a signature."

"You're infernally clever!" said Mr. Fernwell savagely; "so kind, too, to fill up my will after the manner that most suits yourself, and to allow me not a voice in the matter. That's like Zachary Fernwell—a man of extraordinary acuteness."

Zach did not flinch at the irony; he turned upon his father at once, and gave his pitiless reply.

"It is in my hands to make terms with Mrs. Henwood alone, and sink all evidence. But I come to offer benefits to all; and I must have my own way, or you shall never touch a penny of the money."

"It strikes me that unless Teddy is on your side—Teddy and I together—your case will lose half its weight."

"I might be content with half the money," was the dry reply.

"Cursed glum over it all, *you* are," said Fernwell, turning upon his elder son; "why don't you say something, and not sit, all of a heap there, like a Guy Fawkes!"

"What shall I say?" asked Teddy wearily. "I am tired of this—I am heart-sick of it!"

"Read what your considerate brother has scrawled there," said Fernwell. "I'd rather not trust him to read it."

Zach passed the paper to his brother, and Teddy read its contents hurriedly—so hurriedly that his father twice called him to order for his indecent haste, and swore twice at him also.

It was a short document, that last will and testament of Richard Fernwell. It divided his property and personal effects, money in the funds, shares in public companies, etc., etc., between Zachary Fernwell, otherwise Henwood, of Henwood's Wharves, and Edward Fernwell, of Upper Ground Street, minus a legacy of seven thousand pounds, bequeathed to his daughter-in-law, Lettice. It constituted Edward and Zachary Fernwell executors, and it wound up with a blessing on the *three* children that Providence had bestowed upon him.

"It's not a bad idea," said Mr. Fernwell, slowly; "it keeps the money in the family, and my daughter Lettice deserves to be rewarded for turning informer against her mother. You come in for rather a small half, Teddy," he added; "but then Zach knows how contented you are with a little!"

"Twenty-six thousand pounds is not a little," remarked Zachary; "it will place my brother in any position that seems most fitting to himself. The will is just enough."

"I shall keep it in my possession. I'll have no tricks played with this one," said Mr. Fernwell.

"If you doubt me, place the will in Teddy's hands. We can both trust him."

"Well, I don't mind that."

"And the witnesses?" asked Zach. "Are there two honest people in the house?"

"Um! that's doubtful," said Mr. Fernwell. "Teddy, find Jackson, and any one else that's handy. This is a queer game, mind you—it's an over-precaution I *don't* like at all. It makes a man so damned low-spirited."

Teddy was proceeding on his mission, when Mr. Fernwell called him back to remind him that the glass was broken, and that excitement had rendered him horribly thirsty; then the father took up the will from the bed, where his son

had placed it, and made an ineffectual effort to peruse it for himself. He laid it down with a sigh, and stretched forth a hand and long arm suddenly, startling Zach by fastening his talons on his shoulder.

"Zach, I know what is in your thoughts—but it's a mistake! You fancy—ha!—ha!—that I'm going to die!"

"You may live many years," said Zach; "but life is ever uncertain, and it is best to arrange one's affairs. Long ago I made my will."

"You?"

"It was a matter of form, but it relieved my mind."

"You won't make old bones—you're likely to die as soon as your father. You were a shrimp of a child, and you're a shrimp of a man! By George! that would be a good joke to die first, after all!"

"I don't see the joke of it," answered Zach.

"You need not have troubled yourself about the will," said Mr. Fernwell, "for I shall not die in a dungeon like this—now the good-luck's coming to me. That would be too hard upon a man—I shouldn't think it—fair."

He still kept his hold on his son's shoulder, much to Zach's dissatisfaction. Zach could feel the impress of every nail.

"I should like, for a year or two, to be rich. To forget all this!" Fernwell said, eagerly; "to have a carriage and pair, and a cellar full of brandy, and to see you now and then—and Teddy very often. Now he's gone, I'll tell you that he's a good fellow, only hatefully pious. I chaff him about his piety; but he *is* a good fellow for all that, and if I had only had the bringing of him up, he would have been the prince of all good fellows, with not a blemish on him!"

"He comes here every day?"

"Ay. To take care of me too, and to try and make me good. That's a capital joke, Zach, but I pretend it isn't, at times, just to please him. Lord! how he brightens up, if he fancies that I am on the turn of the road he wants me to take. As if all roads weren't alike, or there was any thing in his preaching. As if I was going to die, too—or my constitution wouldn't get over twice as much as this!"

Teddy reappeared, followed by Mr. Jackson—who was rubbing his eyes, and looking sulkily over his knuckles—and a little old man in the shoemaking line, and about the best of the denizens of Drag's Court. Teddy carried an

inkstand and pen in one hand, and a fresh glass for his father's stimulant in another. He had forgotten nothing.

"This looks a solemn bit of stuff," said Mr. Fernwell; "but it's a mere form, to please a son who has brought me lots of good news. I hope I can write—I have a hand that shakes like an old woman's. Pass over the pen, Teddy."

Mr. Fernwell affixed his signature with difficulty, Teddy steadying his hand. Mr. Jackson and the cobbler attested the deed, and then Fernwell placed the will under the pillow.

"I keep it, boy, for the present," he said. "Some day I may want you to read it to me again—some long day hence, when you and I are in our great house in the country, eh?"

Zach looked at his watch.

"I have a long distance to go," he said, "and it is late. To-morrow, or the next day, I will call on you again."

"With fresh news, I hope. Something more substantial, Zach—for we may lose this money."

"We are sure of it."

"When do you see Mrs. Henwood?"

"It will be better for Teddy and me to see her together—when you can spare him, I am ready."

"I'll spare him now—to-morrow—any time. I shall be very glad when it's all settled—it seems to throw—me—back a bit."

He closed his eyes as though he was going to faint again, and Teddy administered more brandy to him, motioning at the same time for the visitors to retire. Mr. Jackson and the cobbler went away, mystified at all these proceedings. Zach prepared to follow them.

"Good-night," he said to his father, twice before the answer came.

"Good-night," muttered Mr. Fernwell at last, without opening his eyes.

Teddy saw his brother to the door of the house, where Zach paused for an instant, as if he had more to say.

"How long will he live—do you know?"

"God knows," answered Teddy.

"It is well that he has made that will—see to it—it was a lucky thought of mine."

"Possibly."

"Better for us that it should end like this, Teddy. His life has been unprofitable, and would disgrace ours to the

end. Be secret concerning every thing for the present. Good-night."

"Good-night."

Teddy watched his brother along the court and under the archway to the wider street beyond; then he turned back and went thoughtfully down stairs again. The night's work had disturbed him, and had not satisfied him, it was evident.

He reopened the room door, and entered. Then he paused and looked with dismay at the scene which had changed in his absence. His father had, by some means, and by a desperate effort of his remaining strength, struggled into a position that enabled him to lie almost on his face, with his two hands clutching his unshaven chin. Crumpled beneath him was the will that he had signed, and which he was intently studying again. Above it was the ink-bottle, overturned, and its contents streaming in a long, black, serpentine course over the pillow and the student.

"What is this?" cried Teddy; "what are you doing now? Is it worth while to think more of this scheming for a woman's ruin—this plotting and planning away money that is not ours yet—and may never be ours."

"Pick up the pen—pick up the pen!" cried Fernwell, hoarse with his new excitement; "I'm not the fool he thinks me—or the tool that he would make me, curse him! I shall live to vex him yet, these twenty years, but he sha'n't have the ghost of a chance of MY money, these twenty seconds. Give me the pen."

"What are you doing?" repeated Teddy.

"I'm—I'm making a codicil—I shall want it witnessed again by the same people—by more than the same people, for security—lots of witnesses; look them up—I'll—I'll not be humbugged by a boy like that. I'm a scholar—I understand the law—the forms of law. Dick Fernwell knew every thing, and profited by nothing—ha!—ha!—by nothing. Why don't you give me the pen?"

"Let me write what you dictate."

"I'd rather do it myself—I'm as strong as a horse to-night—getting better fast, Teddy. Give me the pen, and see if there's any ink left in the bottle."

Teddy picked up the pen, took the will from beneath his father's elbow, removed the inkstand, and sat down at the table.

"You revoke all past bequests," said Teddy; "what else?"

"You see it's not written badly for me—I should have managed it, if the cursed ink hadn't tilted over. Here's a mess!"

"You revoke all past bequests—go on."

"And leave all my property, and interest of property due, or about to be due to me, to Edward Fernwell, my eldest son."

Teddy stopped, paused for an instant, then wrote rapidly the words as spoken by his father.

"And I appoint Edward Fernwell my sole executor."

The codicil was written, and passed to Mr. Fernwell, while Teddy went once more in search of witnesses. Mr. Fernwell was still studying his last will and testament, when Mr. Jackson and the cobbler, with attendant friends, returned, Mr. Jackson protesting energetically at the conspiracy against his rest.

"It's for the last time, Jackson!" cried Fernwell; "you're—the best—of men to come."

Codicil signed and witnessed, and Mr. Fernwell's thanks for the trouble that all his friends and fellow-lodgers had taken. The witnesses withdrawn, the will in the son's possession, Mr. Fernwell still face downward, holding his chin with his claws, and staring at the ink-stained pillow.

"You'll try and rest now, father?" said Teddy.

"This is rest—it's a change of position, and quite—comfortable. How I turned myself round, I don't know. You've got the will?"

"Yes."

"Take it home and lock it up," he said.

"I shall remain the rest of the night here."

"Very good. You ought to be grateful—I've done a good deal for you, haven't I?"

"Yes."

"Zach never was grateful for any thing—so Mrs. Henwood will say, the old cat! An artful dodge of Zach's to get a share of my property down for his wife. In-ge-nious!"

His hands or elbows suddenly gave way, and his face fell forward heavily. Teddy was at his side, with one strong arm raising him again. It had been a night of great events, and he did not think it was ended even then.

"Father," he cried, "do you feel worse?"

Mr. Fernwell made an effort to wipe the ink from his face; it had marked him at the last with a foul brand, and rendered him more hideous. Teddy removed it with his handkerchief, and then looked more closely at his father.

"Don't say that you are going away—like this!"

"Not yet, Teddy," he murmured; "years yet—for me!"

"No, no—don't think that now—at the last. For this is *death*!"

"Eh!" gasped Fernwell; "who says so?—who knows?"

"I am certain."

"It's only another—fainting-fit—I've been too much worried. No," with a half shriek, "it isn't a fit! By God! you're right!"

"By that God whose laws you have set aside and trampled on, think now, and try to pray to Him for mercy. Oh! *do* try!"

"I—I can't."

"You are sorry—very sorry for the past. Ask Him to forgive it!"

"Yes—I am sorry!"

"Ask him with me—now!"

He made one feeble effort to follow the earnest prayer that passed from his son's lips, then his head grew very heavy on Teddy's arm—and all was over with him.

There was one less in Drag's Court—and one more mourner!

BOOK VII.

"SIXES AND SEVENS."

CHAPTER I.

MRS. HENWOOD RECEIVES VISITORS.

MRS. HENWOOD had come back early from her wanderings. In the middle of November, she was once more an inmate of her house at Wimbledon. She had tried Scarborough for August, but its pomps and vanities had palled upon her; she had met no old acquaintances, and had been twice snubbed by the new ones, after immense efforts to get on speaking terms with them. She had returned to London, and dashed off to Paris; she had been ever partial to the gay capital in her best days, but whether the gayety was not to her taste now, or her best days were over, it is certain that Paris did not please her, and that in the foggiest, dampest, dirtiest month of the year, she was at home again.

Mrs. Henwood had become an unsettled woman. We have seen this state of unrest growing upon her—witnessed it led her into much extravagance of conduct. She was forty-five years of age now, and should have exhibited that staidness of deportment consistent with her years. But she was a woman with a secret on her mind still—for she was not aware of the machinery at work against her, and the wheels that had gone round in Drag's Court—and it preyed upon that mind, never very strong. She was a woman who had been disappointed—who had lost caste with herself—who had made love to a marqueterie-worker, and been repulsed from his arms; she had become burdened with thought, and had lost much of her vanity—altogether then a miserable woman!

It was a grand instance of solitariness, shut up in that great house, but she labored hard to consider herself content with it. She did not see a great deal of her daughter, but seeing enough to be certain of Lettice's unhappiness, was not to make her heart light, though all seemed coming round as she had prophesied. Lettice had been a strange, ungrateful, self-willed woman, putting herself ever against the mother, and returning suspicion for suspicion; but Mrs. Henwood thought more of Lettice now, for she thought less of herself. She fancied that her daughter shunned her—nay, she was sure of it. Mrs. Henwood had begun to think that society was very tiresome—not worth the trouble of dressing for, or spending money upon; and although there were still flashes of that old vain spirit, which had turned her head with her own charms, and led her into extravagance, still she knew that she was not happy in her widowhood. If Martin Wynn would not have her, she did not see why she should remain in single blessedness for his sake. She thought sometimes that she would encourage Mr. Tinchester more, for he had been a faithful servant, and if any body liked her on this earth, it was that gentleman; but she sighed in his company again, and thought what a little, old-fashioned, pottering man he was, with no idea in the world above the wharves at the water-side—a little man, who bobbed and hobbled about her drawing-room more after the fashion of the sparrow-tribe than of human-kind. But she was very lonely; Martin Wynn was a rock of adamant, she knew, and Tinchester was a man with a certain amount of affection for her. She might have married before this, for the world was cognizant of her wealth, and skeletons with money-bags are ever at a premium; but she possessed some sense, and more shrewdness, and an undisguised effort to obtain her cash set her always against the wooer. She was not a miserly woman, the reader is aware, and when misers made a dash at her, and groveled in the dust for the sake of her wealth, she had the discretion to flutter away from their clutches. It had all been pleasant sport enough, and rendered her popular; but the excitement was over, the pleasure had palled, and there she was still alone in the world, sick of society, troubled with the crime of bond-destroying, deserted by her daughter and her son-in-law, and wondering whatever would become of her.

She was wondering that very morning in November when we look in upon her, sitting before her polished fire-grate, and shivering, despite the good fire in front of her. She continued to age rapidly—that had once been her greatest trouble, the rapidity with which the wrinkles came, and the necessity that there had been to eke out a scanty crop of hair, with French curls—ay, when she was thirty years of age! She had begun to “make up” at thirty; and it was a terrible truth that at forty-five years of age she looked, shorn of decoration, almost ten years an older woman. She believed that fact at last; her maids had deceived her, and her flatterers had deceived her, until then; now she had grown a woman who judged for herself. Also a woman who did not study appearances so much, but occasionally exhibited a recklessness concerning them, that was new to the domesticities at Wimbledon, and showed how unhappy she was.

She was disregarding appearances that day. No one was expected; it was raining without, and she was not likely to be intruded upon—the side curls were up stairs on the wig-block, the rouge had not been touched, and it was an old Mrs. Henwood who sat in the drawing-room with an unheeded novel in her lap. She had been trying to read, but she had never liked reading, and the effort failing her, she had given herself up for “a good think;” and terribly miserable she was looking over it, for, as before remarked, she was wondering what would become of her.

Still wondering, when a formidable summons at the street door startled the few nerves that she had ever possessed. Mrs. Henwood leaped from her chair at the thought of visitors catching her in *deshabille*, put her hands to her shorn temples, to make sure that she had come down without her curls that morning, and gathered the skirts of her dressing-gown round her. She was preparing to run for it, when the servant made his appearance in the drawing-room.

“Who is it?” she cried—“any of the Browns, or the Wilkinsons?—show them into the breakfast-room, and tell them that I will be down in a minute.”

“It’s young Mr. Henwood.”

“Young Mr. Henwood?” said Mrs. Henwood — “oh! never mind, then—show him in.”

It did not matter about her son-in-law; she was not going

to put herself out of the way for him, she thought, a little resentfully; he might see how old and care-worn she really looked, if he chose—perhaps he would tell Lettice, and Lettice would come to Wimbledon to see her mother.

Zachary was announced, and Zachary entered the room, followed by his brother, whom for an instant Mrs. Henwood did not recognize.

"I thought you were alone," she said irritably, her mind reverting to the side curls again; "the servant only mentioned your name."

"I told him not—it was scarcely necessary, Mrs. Henwood," said Zach, stiffly; "this is my brother, Edward Fernwell."

Mrs. Henwood gave a little jump as she recognized the gentleman whom Zach had introduced to her in this free-and-easy manner. She bowed to him, however, and looked askance at him as he returned her bow. She had heard Mr. Wynn speak well of this man—but she had mistrusted him herself, for he was a Fernwell, with bad blood in his veins. It consoled her to think that he *was* bad; it reconciled him with her past actions. And now they came in together—for the first time in their lives those brothers together—and she was sure that the elder one was bad enough then, crafty and revengeful as the serpent whom she had reared.

She felt, on the instant, that they came there as despoilers of her peace—merciless men, who would take away the few scraps of comfort that remained to her—men who had found out every thing, perhaps! She did not notice that they were both in mourning, until they had been sitting before her some minutes; she only knew that she did not like their looks, and that they threatened danger to her. Her nerves gave way again, and she began to tremble as she subsided into that chair from which they had aroused her; she did not know how much she was in their power, or what was the punishment for the act that her rashness had committed.

Zach saw that he had but a poor adversary, and it was with a contemptuous smile that he began.

"Mrs. Henwood, I have taken the liberty to lock the door, in order that we may not be interrupted."

"I did not notice it."

"I am very sorry to say that my brother and I have come

here on most serious business. The nature of that business will explain the coldness that has sprung up between us, and my reasons for asking Lettice to absent herself from this house."

Yes, they knew all, thought Mrs. Henwood, with a sinking heart. Now, let her wonder more than ever what would become of her from this present day!

"I have not come, Mrs. Henwood, to make a long accusation myself—to ask for my rights, and why they have been abused so much. I leave that to my elder brother, who is the man that will fight this injustice to the end, if it be necessary to ask the Law to interfere. My brother, who has been more wronged than I."

The Law! It was an ugly word—it dashed her down at once. The weak woman spread her thin hands before her face, and cried a little; when the hands dropped into her lap, there were a few more years imprinted on her countenance.

"I wish harm to no one—I would not do harm, if I could help it. Have I not benefited you enough?"

"That is a matter for future argument. I increased your business, and you made me your partner, and gave me your daughter for a wife. Madam, I was intensely grateful, until I discovered that all this kindness was simply an atonement—*partly* an atonement—for an act of treachery toward me and my family."

"Lettice has told you—"

"Every thing."

"Well, well, tell me what you want? I should have told you myself before I died, for it was a rash act, and it has greatly troubled me."

"My brother will tell you what arrangements we have concluded together—what we think fair to us, and merciful to you."

She looked at Teddy again, and he, who had been intently watching her, colored as their eyes met.

"My brother wishes me to speak in this case," said Teddy, thus appealed to; "it looks better, perhaps is better, madam. I have thought a great deal of this story of a hidden document—it has been a study with me lately—it has even struck me, that it was your father's intention to destroy that deed, whenever he was convinced of the complete unworthi-

ness of our family. I believe that if he had not died suddenly, he would have burned it instead of you."

"I am sure of it," cried Mrs. Henwood, eagerly; "I have thought so much about it myself lately—tried to remember so much, too—and have succeeded. He was anxious about the cabinet on his death-bed—only a few days before he had found out—"

"Our unworthiness," added Teddy; "our low estate and guilty lives—very likely."

"This is not to the purpose," said Zach; "we can not argue upon imaginative points while facts exist."

"You will allow me to explain," said Teddy, coldly; "I have agreed with you, I think, upon this matter?"

"Yes—we are agreed."

"Facts exist, my brother says," said Teddy; "and I believe honestly with him that it is your duty to us, to your God, to make atonement for a great error."

Mrs. Henwood objected to this tirade upon duty—she saw nothing but hypocrisy in it. It was all true enough; but she was not to be told her duty by a Fernwell—by a man equal to his brother in rapacity. It angered her, but it rendered her more strong.

"What atonement do you require?" she asked; "and what are the existing facts with which you threaten me?"

"The facts are a copy of the deed of gift, the testimony of a witness still living to its authenticity, and a letter of your father's which accompanied that deed."

"Such evidence would not render your cause successful," she said, like a woman who would make the best bargain for herself; "but I am getting old, and I think," appealing to Zach in preference to his brother, "that the family need not be disgraced by so pitiful a story as this. You are a Henwood now, and should fight my battles for me."

"Madam, you would have ruined me," said Zach; "you would have cast me back to the streets—you would have done so, but for Lettice."

"No," cried Mrs. Henwood; "you should have never been cast back. I only wanted my daughter to myself, and you might have made your own terms with me."

"At his expense," said Zach, pointing to his brother.

"Oh! I knew nothing of him; he was a thief before I knew you. I saw his name in the papers more than once; he was living with his father, and I was afraid of him."

"With a perfect right to feel afraid, Mrs. Henwood," answered Teddy; "for I *was* a thief, then—and only saved, later in my life, from utter ruin."

"What do you want now?—let us settle this," she cried impatiently.

"My brother and I propose to end this matter without the law's interference"—Mrs. Henwood began to shiver again—"without the story becoming known to your friends. The deed conveyed the Warwickshire estates to the Fernwell family, and those estates were sold for sixty thousand pounds. Well," said Teddy, with a sharpness that startled Zachary, as well as Mrs. Henwood, "we want that money."

Had the desire for wealth come to him too? It is a natural desire, to which the best of us are prone, and Teddy knew the value of money, and what changes it would make in his life. He looked very eagerly toward his aunt, as though her decision were important to him; for the first time in his life he resembled his father; and yet there was a strange look in his eyes that was not cupidity, but simply an eagerness that was intense.

Zach moved in his chair; he was a suspicious man, and the thought crossed him suddenly and unpleasantly that he might have trusted too much in Teddy, and Teddy might be ready to overreach him presently. From that instant he was on guard against his brother.

"You want sixty thousand pounds—great heavens! It would almost ruin me now."

"It is reparation—we have been robbed of that sum," argued Teddy. "We are considerate in claiming nothing for interest on that money held back from us. We forgive the past—we actually forego part of our rights, madam. All this," turning to Zach, "is as you wish, I believe."

"Yes; I think that is fair."

"I don't think—I am nearly sure that the money is not available," said Mrs. Henwood. "I have spent a great deal—I have relied upon the business—I shall have to sell some property, and dispose of my diamonds, before I can make it up. It is next door to ruin."

"That is impossible," corrected Zach; "but I should be loth to press you for my share, if it will in any way inconvenience you. You, Mrs. Henwood, have expressed regret for the past, and have made no effort to resist us. My

share I will resign for your share in the business, if you prefer it."

Mrs. Henwood colored; all the Henwood pride in her mounted to her cheeks, that pride in her business which had made more than one fortune. To be set aside, to let it all pass into his hands at last; and yet to get rid of the worry of business, of this partner, of a debt of twenty thousand pounds, and of her crime together!

"I will think of it," she said; "the money or the business shall be yours."

She faced her other opponent then, and said,

"I will make atonement at this heavy cost to you and your father—there, you have the best of me, for I own that is just enough."

"My father is dead, madam," said Teddy; "therefore his share is disposed of by will. You will kindly pay to me as his executor that share in addition to my own."

Zach did not like this remark; Teddy had been reserved lately concerning his father's will; had kept it back, and put him off in several questions that he wished to make.

"Or Mrs. Henwood can pay the amount to the legatees," said Zach.

"Exactly," answered Teddy. "The will shall be produced on the next meeting, and I hope that the money will be forthcoming."

"You need not fear, sir," said Mrs. Henwood.

"There will be lawyers with us in the next meeting," said Teddy; "it is necessary for a few formal deeds and signatures."

"I do not see the necessity," said Mrs. Henwood. "If I give you the money, what else is required?"

"Security from us, Edward and Zachary Fernwell, that we hold ourselves pledged to take no ulterior proceedings in this case."

"Oh! I did not think of that. Yes—yes—that will be necessary. I must tell my own solicitor something of the truth, and he shall meet yours. But what made *you* think of this?"

"It appeared necessary—that's all. And the money—when can we have it?"

"When you like," said Mrs. Henwood.

"We purpose calling here in a fortnight's time—or at your solicitors'."

"I will let Zachary know the day."

"But—"

"But you need not fear my change of mind. I am anxious to satisfy all claims upon me. I have been a wicked woman enough. God forgive me!"

"Amen!" said Teddy.

Mrs. Henwood again looked fiercely toward the speaker. He had come to grasp at her money, but she could bear that better than any hypocrisy of religion. She could not believe in any religious feeling in these Fernwells—they were all thoroughly bad!"

"I need not detain *you* any longer," she said, with no little asperity. "In a short while you shall have your money, sir. You"—she spoke with bitterness here—"are only asking for your rights; if you had demanded more, I am a weak woman, and must have given way to you. In your power, gentlemen, at last!"

"Madam, our power is—" began Teddy, then he stopped, looked at her, at Zach, at the velvet carpet, and was silent. He never finished his sentence; he buttoned his black coat to the throat in a nervous manner, and in his absence of mind put on his hat at once.

"I am going," he said, at last. "You remain here, Zach?"

"A little while," answered the brother. "In a few days you will hear from me."

Teddy went away, and Mrs. Henwood turned with excitement to her son-in-law, as the door closed on the elder brother.

"All this may be just enough—*is* just," she corrected; "but still you keep me in the dark. I can not understand why you, of all men, turn against me."

"I have not turned against you, Mrs. Henwood."

"Why did you not spare me—your wife's mother—this bitter humiliation?" she cried. "Wherefore the necessity of taking your brother into your confidence, and bringing him here, a witness to my shame?"

It was a cry of baffled pride, and there was no repentance in it, then. Zach repressed a smile at his mother-in-law's dismay—at her eccentric reasoning. He could take the vantage-ground of a higher principle than hers; it was a new position, too, that pleased him.

"My brother was an injured man. I could not let him

remain in indigence, when the power to raise him was in my hands."

"You raise him at your own expense," said Mrs. Henwood, not heeding her visitor's feelings in her argument, not thinking of them even; "and that is so remarkable for you!"

Zach colored. Yes, that would have been remarkable, had it been true.

"Why could we not have given him a sum of money equal to that which he demands, and kept this secret from him? He would have jumped at it greedily enough, and you would have spared me more."

"It would have been satisfactory to a few of us," said Zachary; "but it was not for me to propose this new way to pay old debts."

"I have no friends in the world — no relations, save my daughter and—and *you!*" she added with a wrench; "could you not have waited for my death, and taken every thing!"

"Mrs. Henwood," said Zach with cutting politeness, "allow me to explain that conduct of mine which seems at present incomprehensible to you. I might have done this, or something like this, for your sake, but—I could not trust you."

"Trust me!" exclaimed Mrs. Henwood.

"You know what a terrible thing want of confidence is," said Zach in the same calm, measured tones, "for you have distrusted me all my life, and set yourself, until our partnership, in opposition to me. I was bad enough, perhaps—I am not a hero—but you rendered me worse by your suspicions. In my turn, I learned to distrust every body with whom I came in contact—you along with the rest."

"I have deserved it!" moaned Mrs. Henwood.

"I distrusted you before this destruction of the bond," continued Zach, "for I read your character correctly, and saw too well its vanity and frivolity, and where it would lead you. In plain truth, I fought hard for the partnership, because it was my only chance—because it was as certain as death that you would marry again, and send me adrift."

"You have watched me very closely," said Mrs. Henwood sharply.

"Yes. It has been my business to watch—for you were

in love with a man beneath you in station, and that man would have secured all your money and kept it away from me."

"Well—he shall not have it all."

Mrs. Henwood lay back in her chair, a weak and powerless woman. This man knew every thing—had filled her own house with spies, doubtless—on every action of her life there had been an incessant watch.

"I doubted your wish to remain a widow," said Zach, "and I doubted what will you might write, or in whose favor it might be drawn. So, Mrs. Henwood, I struck out for myself a course that has tended to a little embarrassment, but which, you will agree with me, was the most safe and sure."

Mrs. Henwood made no farther reply. She remained heaped in her chair, a miserable woman; she was wholly at his mercy—there was nothing worth responding to, she considered. Let him have his say—and go. He had spoken many bitter truths, and shown her how deep and calculating a man he was; it would be well for her when she was quit of him. Let the dissolution of partnership take place, and leave her to enjoy—to *enjoy!*—the remainder of her fortune; at least, she would be quit of this man.

Zach rose after a while, and stood before her with a hand extended.

"I have fairly explained my motives," he said, "and you must blame my teaching, rather than myself, if I have shown my worldliness too much. We may be better friends for this."

"We may," murmured she.

He still kept his hand outstretched, and she placed hers within it at last. It was necessary that a semblance of good feeling should exist between them; she could not afford to make him her enemy. Thus they parted, and it was only when she was assured that no farther intrusion would be made upon her, that this unhappy woman gave way altogether.

CHAPTER II.

A FAMILY JAR.

FAINTLY as the "minor character" of Lettice Henwood has been sketched upon our canvas, the reader has become sufficiently acquainted with it to feel assured that Lettice inherited much of her mother's eccentricity, allied to a restlessness of disposition peculiarly her own.

She was a woman who had had but little chance of happiness possibly, whose self-will had taken her the wrong road early in life, and who lessened every chance by a disposition that tried herself, her husband, and all connected with her. A clever, but a hard girl—stern where she should have been womanly, and yet, by a strange contrariety, romantic and unreal where a certain worldliness would have stood her in better stead. An incomprehensible woman, to whom we would have devoted more space for analysis had it been necessary for the working of our story, and to whom we turn at the eleventh hour, to note how her actions altered very materially the future fortunes of the brothers Fernwell—our leading characters, and the ruling agents of this story.

Zach had said nothing to his brother, or Mrs. Henwood, of a considerable amount of unhappiness at home—special unhappiness, which he had brought on himself, and which had helped to render things uncomfortable Stamford Hill way. The child that had been born to him had not tended to ameliorate matters; the stormy elements of life had set in, and Zach was holding his ground for the sake of the moral. Lettice and he had quarreled more than once concerning the assignment that had been discovered and destroyed; Zach had followed up his clew, and obtained possession of all leading facts while Lettice was a prisoner in her room; and when she was well enough to make her way down stairs again, she came in for the full force of marital upbraidings, just enough in some respects, but marked by a severity that crushed out the poetry of the whole affair, and humiliated Lettice. Zach was a stern man in private life;

in his best moods a phlegmatic individual, taking every thing as his due, and patronizing Lettice by a stray word of kindness, or a fugitive caress ; in his worst moods harsh, uncharitable, and unforgiving.

He was a man who preferred business, and the profits to be derived from it, to his wife on all occasions ; his wife was for the few leisure moments that he could spare for his home, and it was always an affront to him if she were not ready to be his slave on those occasions. He scarcely knew whether he loved his wife or not ; he had never loved her so much as he had pretended, of that he was aware ; and he had had, once upon a time, a liking—or a sneaking—for Arabella Evvers ; but whether he had ever really loved his wife was a doubtful point, which he did not consider worth deliberation. He was aware that she loved him—that her resentment of his absence from her was even a part of that affection—and there had been, before the birth of his child, a few stray thoughts concerning less business in the future, and more time for Lettice and her society—even a far-away dream of retirement, and he and Lettice in a country home together. If he had spoken of these thoughts, it would have been better for him, but he had a soul above childish imagery, and there was not time even—there never was time !

Lettice believed that she was not loved, that she never had been. She saw very clearly now how much of scheming there had been in his courtship, and she was a woman with a bias to the worst side—a suspicious woman, too, who took after her mother. Months ago she had thought herself wronged ; latterly she was convinced of it, despite the wrong which she had committed. That wrong had troubled her when her strong imagination had sided with her weakness ; its confession would have moulded her character anew, had it been received in the right spirit, and with a fair estimate of her motives. But her husband had not time to weigh these fancies, to “go in” for the ideal ; before him ever the one grand pursuit of money, under every circumstance, in the face of every obstacle, even at the risk of all good men’s opinion of him, this soul-absorbent chase.

In Lettice’s story he had seen only a way to benefit himself—to render himself, by one grand *coup*, by so many thousand pounds a richer man. This was better than business at Henwood’s—and he set every thing aside, even Let-

tice, after the expression of sentiments concerning her duplicity, for the new study which was to realize his golden dreams.

True, there was unhappiness at home—an estrangement that had already become serious between his wife and him; but then, the money! Wife, home, *himself*, his name on earth, his hope in heaven, what were they all to him, what consideration did they cause him, when there were thousands to be made by the exercise of his ingenuity? He did not reason thus, for he seldom allowed himself time to reason; but had he had leisure to reflect while posting on to the goal, he would have considered in this fashion. He hurried on, and if he had one opinion more than another, it was that he was an estimable member of society. Other members, less fortunate than he, went down in his progress, and got under his feet somehow; he could not stay to raise them, or to pity them, in his triumphant course. There were a few every-day sympathizers—his wife among them, before the last difference between them—who told him that he was wearing himself out, and who warned him to be careful of this intense application; but he answered them with a laugh, and the old jest “that he had not time to feel ill!” and that the busier he was, the stronger seemed to become his constitution.

He came home, however, from Mrs. Henwood’s on the day mentioned in our last chapter, to indulge in a little rest for once. The victory had been won; Mrs. Henwood had lowered her flag, and he was likely to become very rich, with the business in his own hands. He was even inclined to extend a free forgiveness for all past offenses to his wife—as, on memorable occasions, a generous government knocks the fetters from the wrists of all political offenders. Here had been a grievous offender against his policy; but she was the wife of his bosom, the mother of his child, and he had thought, coming home, of the luxury of forgiving her. We believe that Zach Fernwell would have been a very different man, if he had given himself more time for thought—for those thoughts with which business had no connection. He went home a different man to him who had left the house without a “good-morning” to his helpmate; thinking that it would be a pleasant thing to see that helpmate more often, after all, and dwelling again on that villa in the country, as a thing not wholly impossible before he became middle-aged.

He was dashed down on his return by the stern, set features of his wife. Lettice had been brooding on her own version of that past story, and on the result of Zach's manœuvring. She knew that that day was to decide the matter, as well as Zach did, and she was curious and restless concerning it, more especially as her husband had not asked for any advice, but treated her in his usual way—like a cipher. Apart from her mother, she was inclined to take her mother's part against her husband—just as, apart from Zach in the old courting-days, she had been staunch to him, fighting his battles at every opportunity. Verily this would have been a character worth coming into the foreground, had we not fallen among thieves at so early a stage of our story.

Zach, not the most amiable of men, accepted the affront that was put upon his clemency, and subsided into his usual—that is, his disagreeable—self. He dropped into his arm-chair, ordered the nurse with the baby from the room, and then buried himself in the *Times* newspaper, that was handy at his side. After all, there was something more refreshing in the "City Intelligence" than in a wife's apathy; he could drown in figures any small disappointment that he might have felt. He loved figures!

Lettice was in no taciturn mood, however. She had been taciturn long enough, she thought.

"Are you going to tell me how it has been settled or not?" she asked angrily; "or am I not worth a word of explanation?"

Zach doubled his paper in half, and looked over it at her.

"It did not strike me that you cared to know," he answered; "but it has been settled satisfactorily."

"What does that mean?"

"It means that your mother will, without the publicity of a lawsuit, carry out the conditions of her father's bond in most respects."

"Just, perhaps," answered Lettice; "but you—surely you—have shown a certain degree of generosity?"

"Generosity for what?"

"For your wife's word. It was a compact between my mother and myself, that in lieu of your share, one half of the profits of the business should be yours."

"I did not know of this. I was no party to your *compacts*,"

he said, with a sneer; "and I object to any woman making compacts for me. I think that I am able to manage that little business for myself."

"You have taken advantage of my mother's weakness—you have interdicted me from seeing her, lest I should counsel her to resist you; and I have, though under protest, obeyed your wishes—"

"Thank you for your docility," said Zach.

"You have played your cards well, having the whole game in your hands," she continued, not heeding his interruption; "and I demand to know what you have done!"

"Demand, Lettice!" said Zach gravely; "you should be the last woman to demand any thing of me concerning this grave offense against your self-respect, and your husband's interests."

"Have you taken your share with the rest?"

"I have not desired to embarrass your mother. I have accepted a compromise, and allowed her to retire from the business."

"That business will be all yours, then?"

"Yes. Will you congratulate me?"

"No, no—I can't do that. You have not acted generously toward my mother, or me."

"Your mother may not consider so—but you must."

"I will not!" cried Lettice; "I will not congratulate you on your self-abasement. You forget what my mother did for you—what she saved you from!"

This was an ill-timed allusion, and it added a cloud to Zach's countenance. He abhorred the past, and all those spectres in it which issued thence occasionally to scare him. He was insulted by his wife's allusion to it, and he turned upon her with all that hardness and cruelty of speech for which he was remarkable at Henwood's Wharves, when he lost money by contracts, or met deceit in his subordinates.

"I detest your mother!" he exclaimed; "I have told her so, in my own words, and a little more courteously, to-day—but she knows that I detest her! Knowing that yourself now, Lettice, do not side with her against me. I will not have it in this house—in hers, if you will, if it please you, but not here!"

"What do you mean? That you are tired of me?"

"I am tired of your peevishness, your false views of every

thing affecting me, your jealousy of that which is my business and my life—the readiness with which you set yourself in opposition!”

“This is not the first time that you have taunted me with being an encumbrance,” she said; “nor the first time that I have been assured of the folly that led me to become your wife. I will not have this tyranny!—I am not the woman to submit to it!”

“You will obey me in every thing.”

“I will not have my mother robbed of every thing she has in the world to benefit a man who proclaims to me, her daughter, his detestation of her. I have a right to protest against it!”

“Not in this house,” repeated Zach, coldly.

“Well, in hers, then. I can side with her there—I can be a comfort to her there, making amends for my past ingratitude. If you don’t want me here, I can go! I shall be never happy again, for I have lost all confidence in you.”

“You have turned your brain with novel-writing, I think,” cried Zach; “I haven’t time to study you, or to care for your bewilderments. When I come home, I expect something better to greet me than a sour-faced, distrustful woman!”

“You would rather have me away—go on, sir!”

“I would rather have the house empty a thousand times than put up with these moods,” answered Zach. “I don’t believe now that we were ever fitted for each other. You would be more happy by your mother’s side than by mine—go there! Claim what income you like, and that I can afford, for the support of yourself and child, and let us afford to the world another instance of the mistakes ill-assorted people make in marrying together.”

Zach scarcely meant what he said; he thought that he was taking the most direct means to bring his wife to reason. But then he had never thoroughly understood his wife, and he was not at all prepared for her reply.

“Very well. I will go to Wimbledon as soon as it is possible. If you do not ask me to remain here—if you retract not all your bitter words, by heaven! I will go—believing that it is best for both of us.”

“You are at perfect liberty to make your own choice,” said Zach; “doubtless the arrangement would prevent much

quarreling, and leave us both with more time to devote to our peculiar professions. Any arrangement that suits you will be perfectly satisfactory to me."

"Well, well, I have been waiting for this. It has only come a little sooner than I expected."

She subsided into silence after this. Zach tried hard to master the money article, now the chance was afforded him; and there were no more accusations or recriminations that night. He sat up all night apart from her, and went to business the next morning without seeing her. That would bring her to her senses, he thought—if not, why, perhaps separation between them would not be the worst thing that could ensue. He would give attention to it presently.

CHAPTER III.

MRS. HENWOOD SETTLES ALL CLAIMS.

ZACH's peculiar method of bringing his wife to her senses was not a success. Zach, in the few intervals allowed him for sober reflection, believed that it would result in success; but there came an influx of business to both wharves, and he could not give that attention to the subject which its domestic importance deserved. He was, taking all things into consideration, somewhat glad of this; it removed one little care from him, or, at least, relieved his mind of a certain amount of undue pressure. He combined application to business with an assertion of his dignity at home, by working early and late at his counting-house, and seeing little, if any thing, of his wife.

He left his wife's thoughts to prey upon herself, believing that they would plead in his favor; but they rose up against him, and made his latter actions wholly inexcusable. She had no faith in that business, and now, alas! she had no faith in him. By every action of his life he demonstrated his want of love for her, and she became convinced—thoroughly convinced—that a deed of separation between them was what he wished, and what would conduce alone to peace. She was sure of this on that night they quarreled together; and to have kept to their separate rooms—their separate lives since—was but to strengthen her resolution,

not to shake it. What might happen afterward in her favor, God alone knew!—she would trust to time for happiness, with him or without him, but she would go away now. Her pride said “Go”—her new and strange interest in her mother impelled her—her resentment against her husband, who had so speedily tired of her, forced her onward in her foolish step.

Her mind was strongest when Zach thought that she was most wavering. She was packing up her things, and shedding a few secret tears over the end of her love-dream, and the earthliness of the idol that she had worshiped, when Zach went away by appointment a fortnight afterward to meet his brother, Mrs. Henwood, and four solicitors, in a dingy and fusty room on the first floor of a house of dreariness in Lincoln's Inn.

Mrs. Henwood had kept her word, and lost no time. She had consulted her solicitor, and bade sundry deeds be prepared concerning a dissolution of partnership between her and her nephew; she had given instructions for farther monetary arrangements, and had perplexed her lawyers—unimpressible people, too—with her motives for getting rid of so large a sum of money in so short a space of time. Attempts had been made to reason with her on the impropriety of her actions in this respect; but Mrs. Henwood was an obdurate woman, when it pleased her, the reader knows, and the solicitors succumbed, and thought that their client's conscience was seriously affected by “these Fernwells.” Of course they knew all about the existence of these Fernwells, as well as Mrs. Henwood did, for family lawyers know almost every thing.

The lawyers had been reasoning with her a few minutes before Zach's arrival—suggesting that a clearer exposition of the case might enable them to do more justice to their client.

“Justice has nothing to do with it,” said Mrs. Henwood, wearily. “I have to pay money away, and that is my business. You have written me a deed binding my two nephews to abstain from all farther claims on my estate, and my heirs—that is your business,”

“Yes, ma'am.”

“Now read that deed over to me before those—those young men come.”

She was more anxious about her absolution from farther claims, than of the debt of restitution which she had resolved to pay that day. It took a weight from her mind to pay that money; and though it impoverished her more than she had anticipated—for she had been all her life an extravagant woman—still she was prepared, having no one to study but herself. But she must be free from all farther claims—from a sight of those who had worked her so much mischief in their day—disgracing her name, killing her sister, robbing her of a daughter, of a partnership in her own firm, of the whole business together, and lastly of two thirds of the money which she had received for the Warwickshire estates. What a mass of evil for one family to work upon another! she thought; and what a poor fool she had been to aid in her own humiliation by bringing a snake to her fireside to cherish! It was her own fault; she had brought it all on herself; she had taken Martin Wynn's advice, and lo! the result in that lawyer's dusty office that day!

The worst known, the worst prepared for, she was more like the Mrs. Henwood whom we have met at an earlier stage of this history. She was a woman who maintained her position again, and was proud and repellent—a something immeasurably above the Fernwells. She had thought long and bitterly upon them, it may be seen, and she had begun to think less of the harm that she had done to them. In the first impulse, after that dialogue with her son-in-law, wherein he had taunted her with the character that she had made of him, she had been nearly heart-broken. That same day, in the rain, she had ordered her carriage to the door with the intention of seeing Martin Wynn, and telling him all her weakness and sorrow; then, when she was ready, she had sent the equipage back again to the stables, and made up her mind to fight the battle alone. She could not face Martin Wynn any more; she was ashamed to see him now; she had asked him to marry her, and that was her last humiliation. She could not prostrate herself in the dust before him, and confess how weak she had been, and to what an end her weakness—and crime—had brought her. After that struggle she hardened a little, perhaps, for she was very much like her old self, ringlets and all, when Mr. Botchkin, senior partner of Botchkin and Dapple, Solicitors, to whom Mr. Tinchester had recommended her long ago

read slowly to her the deed he had prepared. He had finished, and Mrs. Henwood was becoming nervous at the delay, and wondering whether the brothers had altered their minds, and seen a better way of benefiting themselves and harassing her, when Zachary Fernwell was announced. A few minutes afterward the elder brother, looking very pale and stern, followed in Zach's steps.

Teddy had brought his own solicitor—Zach was also accompanied by his confidential lawyer; there was quite a gathering of "birds of prey" in that room in Lincoln's Inn.

No greetings had been exchanged between aunt and nephews on this occasion—Teddy had hazarded a clumsy bow in her direction, but had been rewarded with a stare that had discomfited him. Mrs. Henwood had been great in looking people down, and trouble had not deprived her of all her accomplishments. She was resolved to shake off these Fernwells after this day; she had made up her mind to go abroad for good; she even thought very resentfully of her daughter with the rest now. Apart from the old world, she would begin life afresh, finding new and better friends in Paris. It was satisfactory to think that she could not meet with worse.

Teddy and his brother stood talking together while the four solicitors went over the various documents. Mrs. Henwood watched them furtively. She was not quite so strong-minded in their presence, for she felt that it was in their power yet to hold her up to publicity and shame, and she could not trust them even then. She noticed that the brothers seemed to differ on some points, although all had been arranged two weeks ago—that the elder one was even discontented, and seemed to argue with considerable warmth, growing more heated as his brother maintained a cold and equable demeanor. That elder Fernwell was an awful man, she thought, with a shudder; he was restless and insatiable; he was as full of scheming as his father; it was a dark, almost angry face, at which she glanced, and it boded no good to her, she was certain.

"I think that we are ready to settle this *mysterious* matter," said Mr. Botchkin, with no little emphasis; "you, Mr. Edward Fernwell, are to receive twenty thousand pounds for yourself—a like sum as executor to the will of Richard Fernwell. You, Mr. Zachary Fernwell, are to receive an assignment of the whole business of Henwood's Wharves, for the

sum of twenty thousand pounds, payable by you to Mrs. Henwood."

"He pays me nothing!" exclaimed the lady.

"Pardon me, it is paying it in one sense," explained Zachary's solicitor, "and it renders the whole affair more completely a business transaction."

"I understand. Go on," was the peevish answer; "settle this at once, and let me go away."

The business proceeded rapidly after this; the question of the dissolution of partnership was taken first; the signatures were affixed; the receipt for a visionary twenty thousand pounds was given; and Zachary Fernwell stood sole possessor of Henwood's Wharves at last. What a reward of merit!—what a rise in the world! Ten years ago, and he was a boy receiving four shillings a week, and doing barge-work. So much for industry and perseverance, thought Zach, as he gave place to Teddy, after affixing his own name to a renunciation of all farther claims on Mrs. Henwood's property forever—a little stroke of business that Mr. Botchkin thought might as well be done at once.

Zach gave up his papers into Mrs. Henwood's possession, after conferring with his brother; and what those papers were, and whose interests they affected, Messrs. Botchkin and Dapple never knew—and so never forgave Mrs. Henwood for concealing.

Teddy's case was proceeded with. Mrs. Henwood had a wild thought cross her that Teddy might be foiled even now, if she could destroy the papers placed in her possession, but it was a thought that left her speedily. She did not know the extent of her power, or what enemies she might make of those men, or how far the law would stand her friend. Above all, and this to Mrs. Henwood's credit—the last thought and the best—she knew that she had done wrong, and it was an act of honor to let that strange man have a share in his mother's birth-right. But the struggle had been for the instant somewhat acute, and when they looked at Mrs. Henwood again she was deathly white, and panting very much.

Teddy went through the necessary formula, and received twenty notes of a thousand pounds each, which Mrs. Henwood drew from a reticule that she had held tenaciously in her lap.

"I did not suppose that you would have trusted me with a check for the money," she said sharply; "will you see that the notes are right."

Teddy took them in his hands, and counted them very carefully. Surely his eyes began to sparkle as he looked at them; his chest heaved, and his whole face lighted up. She hated him the more for the exultation that it was not in his power to disguise.

Lastly there came the question of the late Mr. Richard Fernwell's share, and who was entitled to it. Zach stopped her with alacrity.

"Clearly the sole executor in the first instance," he said; "but we may as well settle every thing according to the conditions of that will at once. There is no occasion—"

"To trust me with twenty thousand pounds," concluded Teddy; "so much trust-money might turn my head, Zach, or bring back the old weakness."

It was a queer jest, at which he recoiled himself the instant afterward. The face, which the money had brightened, darkened very speedily. He passed the will to the council of four, and two out of the four exclaimed at once, "A codicil!"

"What is that you say?" rang out Zach's voice.

A suspicion of the truth—not the whole truth—flashed to his mind on the instant, and he turned at once upon his brother.

"Teddy—you have deceived me!"

"No—I hope not."

"Not you, whom I have benefited so much—whom I have raised to greatness!" he cried out, forgetting the presence of the lawyers in the first sharp pang of the disappointment that he felt was coming.

"This is my father's own action, unprompted by me. He died in the attempt almost."

"And you did not stop him writing that?"

"No," said Teddy quietly, "I assisted him."

"Re—read that codicil, please," said Zach in choking accents. He was enraged at his loss—trebly enraged at being overreached. He had thought that he had planned wisely and well, and his first attempt at confidence in human kind had proved how treacherous every body was.

The codicil was read. All Mr. Fernwell's property, future

reversions, every thing left to the elder son, Edward Fernwell, of Upper Ground Street.

Zach clenched his hands, and muttered his curses on his dead father, and on the brother who had deceived him.

Teddy heard the latter, and turned to him at once.

"You are disappointed, Zach—I am sorry for it."

"I am disappointed in you," he cried; "a word from you would have stopped this at the last!"

"It might have done so—but I had my reason for not altering it. Will you stay to hear me?"

"No. I have no farther need to remain here—I have no farther trust in you."

He was moving toward the door, when Teddy intercepted him.

"One moment, Zach. Here is Mrs. Henwood—have you any thing to say to her?"

"Nothing."

"Consider once more," he said; "you and she may never meet again, if she leaves England to-morrow."

"What have I to say?" demanded Zach; "do you think that it is my place to be liberal?—or that I am more disposed to listen to you, than I was before I understood your duplicity. Let me pass!"

"It is my place to be liberal, then. Wait for me in the street—I have more to say to you."

Zach looked in a bewildered manner at his brother, before he went away. His place to be liberal!—with the brother who had been cruelly disappointed—surely he meant that!

When he was gone, Teddy turned to his solicitor.

"Is there any thing more to do here?" he asked.

"We have not completed the arrangements for the receipt of the second sum of twenty thousand pounds," he said.

"Oh!—yes—I had forgotten."

Mrs. Henwood dived into her bag again—Fortunatus's bag that day, for it had held forty thousand pounds. The money was in Teddy's hands an instant afterward, twenty more crisp bank-notes, which he received with the same evident relish. His hand trembled as he signed a receipt for the same; he was very flushed and excited, the lawyers noticed, as he bent over the table, but he was looking very happy too—as well he might, thought his solicitor, who had a bill for five hundred pounds coming due next month, and

was doubtful if he should be able to meet it. A sharp snap to the clasp of Fortunatus's reticule drew attention afresh to Mrs. Henwood. She had risen, and was moving to the door.

"One minute," exclaimed Teddy; "I do not wish you to go yet."

"I have paid all demands upon me," she said, coldly; "what have I to stay for here? My solicitors will see to those papers for me."

"Your pardon, but I wish that you should stay," said Teddy; "it is important—it is very important."

Mrs. Henwood's face betrayed a little alarm again. What was there else against her?—was it possible that there had risen up to confront her a something else?

"What do you want with me—now?"

"Shall I speak here? Perhaps it is best—"

"It concerns me?"

"Yes. And my brother Zach."

Mrs. Henwood hesitated. Mr. Botchkin pointed with the feather of his pen to the side door of an adjoining room.

"Here is my own small study, Mrs. Henwood, if Mr. Fernwell has any thing very particular to communicate."

"You will not go away from this room?" she asked, with a little alarm; "I can not trust myself alone with this man if you leave here."

"God bless me!" ejaculated Mr. Dapple, a more nervous man than his partner; "certainly we will remain. Can we send for—for any one?"

"No—wait here."

Mrs. Henwood entered the room, and Teddy, still under suspicion—a man with forty thousand pounds in his pocket—followed her, and closed the door behind him.

• CHAPTER IV.

THE HERO OF THE STORY.

WHEN aunt and nephew were in that inner room, the nephew placed a chair for the aunt, which she declined at first.

"Mine is not a story told in a few words," said Teddy, gently; "and you will pardon me, but you are very weak."

The voice was soft and winning, and startled her. She sank into the chair, and then looked up at him, standing before her with that strange expression on his face, which she had noticed more than once that day. It had steeled her heart against him until then—even then, after the first thrill of a better feeling, the fear that he had reserved his last shaft of malice until that hour, oppressed her with a new weight.

"I ask you to spare me as much as you can," she said, in tremulous accents; "I have paid enough for peace, I think—for I am ruined."

Her pride had vanished again, and the uncertainty of what was coming was troubling her self-possession.

"I will be as brief as I can," said he in reply; "for I am going, in the first place, to speak of myself instead of my brother. It is an innovation, but I will ask you to excuse it."

She inclined her head slightly. What did it all mean?—was she in his power still, or was she not?

"Mine has been an odd life," continued Teddy; "I have been very lucky and unlucky—thought more generously of than I deserved, and as a make-weight, I suppose, now and then misunderstood. I have often wished for a chance of proving that I was not wholly selfish—a thoroughly good chance!—and I think," he added with a laugh, "that it has come to-day."

Mrs. Henwood looked up quickly. This commencement was new and unprepared for. It shadowed forth no farther secrets, and yet it made her tremble, sitting there in the full light of those large dark eyes bent on her.

"No one," he went on, "misunderstands a man or woman when money is in question. Money is a test of character—not the best test, perhaps—but still a fair one. It has tested you, and Zach, and me to-day. And this brings me round to myself again—the boy-thief that you dreaded years ago?"

She shrank away from him for an instant, as though she dreaded him still.

"I was saved from evil—from destruction—by one whom I think is the best man in the world!" said Teddy. "He gave me a good and plain education, at his own expense; he taught me what was right and what was wrong so well,

that the past enormity of my boy's life has been forever afterward a something to appall me. He taught me how to be grateful for all good things, and I loved him very much."

"A good man—yes," said Mrs. Henwood.

"Well, madam, he has lost all hope in me—for my actions have been dark lately. I have been with my father, trying to show a son's duty to him, and in one way or another it has come to pass that I am entirely alone in the world. But I am very strong still," he said, drawing himself up to his full height, "and, to my own surprise, I was never happier than I am to-day."

"You have good reasons to feel happy," she answered.

"Ah! the money you mean," cried Teddy. "Yes, and it is of this money that I wish to speak, having given you a faint idea of my past life, and how an act of yours rescued me from it."

"Of mine?"

"The friend I once had," said Teddy, with a sigh, "was fond of tracing out cause and effect. I have been lately following his example. Your promise to take care of Zach, I find, was my salvation. It led me to try hard to get Zach into your home; it began with a lie, but it brought me face to face with Martin Wynn, and if—and if—it has done no good to Zach, still I believe that it has made me an honest man. But," with a second laugh, that had more embarrassment in it on the present occasion, "this does not prove that I am an unselfish man, at any rate. Let us get on."

He seemed in doubt how to proceed, however; he betrayed more nervousness; he looked wistfully at Mrs. Henwood; he shuffled for an instant with one foot, till he gave a sudden stamp to it that startled Mrs. Henwood nearly out of her chair. After that he darted into his subject with fresh vigor.

"I was always a muff at explanations," he said. "I never could catch my dear master's way of explaining things in the best manner. And I want to explain—if I can—my thoughts of you! There, I shall get on now—don't interrupt me, please," he added, detecting a restless movement in his listener. "I can speak to the end without a blunder, now. I have it all by heart, and if it all comes out simply and quietly, it is so much better than if I were on the stage ranting away about my sacrifices. It isn't a sacrifice—not in the least."

He fought for a fresh supply of breath, and then cut himself short in the pursuit thereof.

"Ah! don't speak," he said, "or you'll throw me out for good. My opinion of you is, that you are a good woman, and that if you were wrong—just a little wrong—in the last affair, it was in the belief that you were acting for the best, and keeping the money in the hands of those who knew best how to appreciate it. All that kind of thing, no doubt, and there's an end of it."

"Oh! yes—there's an end of it," was the dry remark here.

"Ah! you will interrupt! Well, what was I going to say?"

Teddy looked down again, reflected for an instant, and then sprang at his ideas, and took them forcibly by the throat.

"And Zach and I were hard upon you, considering what you had done for Zach—and me! Zach is fond of money, poor fellow, and can't have enough of it! I told him to-day that he did not deserve his rise in life, and that he was ungrateful."

"What could I expect in—"

"In a Fernwell—not much! But then you did not know me!"

Mrs. Henwood was taken aback by this naïve answer. Teddy repressed a smile with it, for he was drifting toward the business part of his discourse.

"You did not know me," he repeated; "and I have been grateful all my life to you for Zach's advancement—for I liked Zach very much *once*, and I regret that the good in him has vanished, God knows where! Yes," he added, more thoughtfully, "I think that I was grateful to you for Zach's preferment, at all events—don't laugh—I taught myself to pray for you, and for a chance, only one, to show that we Fernwells were not all so wrapped up in ourselves as to turn upon our benefactors. The chance came to my brother, and he missed it. I am very thankful, very, very happy, that it has come to me!"

"I—I do not understand!"

"No, madam, nor I don't want you—that is, I don't want you to understand every thing—all my bitter disappointment in a brother of whom I am verily ashamed, and who

has become my last trouble to me. But I wish you to know that I thank you with all my soul for him—for all the better life that came to me by your act, and that it is not Teddy Fernwell who lays a greedy hand upon your money!"

She was not looking up as he spoke, and she was not prepared for the fortune that fell into her lap, that had been plucked in its entirety from the breast-pocket of the speaker's coat, and cast back to her possession. She was thunderstruck; she did not know what to say or do; the tears were running down her cheeks, and she could not stop them; she wanted to speak, but her voice had wholly left her.

"There, I am going now," said Teddy, "but don't let me leave you with a false impression. I never intended for an instant to take a penny of this money, whether mine by law or not. I have money of my own—more than meets my wants; and I shall never—never in all my life, madam—have any one to think of save myself. So it doesn't matter, you see! You would be poor without it—poor by comparison, I know, for I have made every inquiry, in every way, concerning you that I could; and you are a woman whose pride would suffer very much, and suffer unjustly. Had your father lived, he would have destroyed that deed, I am sure. There, it's all plain and clear enough, and I think that I may go."

"You—you of all men to give up this money! I can't take it now; I am poorer—much poorer than I fancied—but I can't take it ALL."

"I would rather drop down dead here than receive any of it back from you!" cried Teddy, with vehemence. "Madam, I should go back to evil with it, and be lost. There, that is rather stagey," he said, assuming suddenly a cooler demeanor, "and it don't suit me. I am going to ask one question."

"Well?"

"Will you think better of me than you have done?"

"God bless you! It is all strange, and like a book."

"And I the hero of it—ha! ha!—well, the position has cost money. There, don't blush, that was not a spasm of regret at my sacrifice which led me to say that. Now, I am going, *aunt*, to kiss you. If you don't like it, scream out, and let us have a fight with the lawyers."

He took her in his arms, and kissed her, she crying still,

and putting her arms round his neck, as she had never thought of doing in all her life till then.

"We must not have you full of trouble in your old age, aunt," he said, as he released her; "we will do our best to help you."

"I'm—I'm not so very old," whimpered Mrs. Henwood, resisting that imputation to the last.

"No—but you will be, fifty or sixty years hence, you know," Teddy corrected; "and you are a woman of position, who requires money, though I wouldn't think so much of it as I used, if I were you. Good-by."

He went hastily from the room, and through the lawyer's office down stairs into the street. His face took a deeper shade as he descended, and there was much pain therein along with the new thoughts that met him in the brighter light.

"Now—*Zach!*" he said.

CHAPTER V.

TEDDY SPEAKS HIS MIND TO HIS BROTHER.

ZACH had waited patiently for his brother in Lincoln's Inn. Time was valuable with the responsibility of a business wholly on his shoulders, but Teddy had asked him to wait, and though the request had been made somewhat peremptorily, still he lingered there, waiting for the end of the mystery.

How it would end, he could almost believe, having had experience already in the eccentricity of his brother; but he hoped against his own convictions, for he could not estimate his brother's unselfishness at the high price of forty thousand pounds. It was not natural—it was not likely—above all, it was very unlike a Fernwell. His brother might offer back a portion of the money—Teddy was foolish enough, perhaps, though he had overreached his own flesh and blood—but he would also offer him something as compensation for his own cruel disappointment. That would be like Teddy, for he was a generous fellow in his way. And if his father had added that codicil of his own free will, why, Teddy would probably see the justice of making restitution.

As he walked up and down, Zach began to ponder on what he should take, and how much of his father's money he should object to take, out of delicacy to the feelings of the hero. He was pondering thus when Teddy came upon him.

"This is a quiet place, Zach," he said, "let us take the other side of the square for a few minutes, and we shall not meet Mrs. Henwood or our lawyers again. I have a little to say to you."

They took the opposite side of the square after this, and walked up and down once before they spoke. Teddy was evidently troubled, and taking even more time than usual to collect his thoughts.

He was the first to speak.

"I am sorry, Zach, that you did not express some regrets to Mrs. Henwood at the dissolution of partnership between you."

"Why should I play the hypocrite? I do not regret it."

"I am more sorry that you did not decline her share of the business, and express your willingness to work for her benefit as you have done, forgetting the claim which we made upon her in our cupidity."

"It was a just claim—it was our mother's birth-right!" said Zach, sharply.

"The deed was not intended to see the light—it was in abeyance—its concealment is a proof of that. But of that no matter. I am speaking of Mrs. Henwood."

"Well?"

"I have given up my claim to any part of her money," said Teddy. "I have returned to her all that fell to my share, by that deed, and by our father's will. Thank God that I am no richer man than when I entered that lawyer's office this afternoon!"

"You have never acted so like a madman!—sacrificing for a fool's idea of gratitude the only chance that you will ever have of riches! Calmly and deliberately, you do not mean to tell me that you have given up the sum of forty thousand pounds?"

"Every penny of it—for every penny would have been a weight upon my soul!"

"You have acted like a fool—and she will think you a fool too! No one will believe it!"

"I shall not test any one's belief, for I shall not relate the story," said Teddy.

"Why go through all these forms of law, to act in this mad fashion?"

"Because," answered Teddy, more gravely, "I could not trust my brother to do his benefactress justice."

"Benefactress!" was the scornful cry of Zachary Fernwell.

"She put you in bad hands, and they trained you to revere the world, and struggle for position in it—but she did her best according to her judgment. She spent her substance on you; she raised you from a low estate, and put her trust in you; she saved you from the streets when you had not strength of will to save yourself; and so—your benefactress!"

"She hated me from the first day that I went into her house. She took me out of vanity—in an eccentric hour, that she wished had never come to her. I am not grateful for such charity as that."

"Nor to one who rewards it instead of yourself."

"You have cut your own throat," was the harsh reply.

"Think so, if it please you. Now listen to a prophecy that was uttered by a better man than you or I will ever be."

"Martin Wynn, of course?"

"Yes. Don't sneer at him, Zach, till you and I are apart, for I will not stand that, even from you."

"I wish him no harm," answered Zach, who relented a little at his brother's earnestness. He was terribly vexed with this brother for his unnecessary sacrifice, but he was always affected in some way or other in his presence. It was very strange!

He judged your character correctly, Zach, long before I did. He saw what you would become, and what I should think of you. He told me that I should live to be ashamed of you—I am!"

"I protest not against it," said Zach, with a lowering brow; "you are welcome to your opinion. I shall never try to change it."

"Heartily ashamed," continued Teddy, "of one who has set so close to his heart all that chokes up the heart's best feelings. You are a rich man, and I a poor one—you have

many chances of happiness, and I not one—but I would not change places with you for a hundred times the money you have haggled for to-day.”

“I do not profess to understand this exhibition of virtuous indignation,” retorted Zach. “I am a man of the world, and the sublimities of life are far above my reach and comprehension.”

“I don’t know whether we shall ever meet again,” said Teddy, mournfully, “but at least we are more apart from this day. I shall never move one step toward you any more—and the next meeting must surely be of the rich man’s seeking.”

“I shall not seek you,” muttered Zach.

“And seeking me, he must come a more humble, chastened and grateful man to my home, before I shall be glad to see him.”

He turned to leave his brother, paused, and then came back again.

“You will never try to change my opinion of you,” said Teddy, quoting Zach’s past words, “for you are content with your own opinion of yourself. It may last your life, or it may not. While that lasts—I blush for you.”

Teddy pulled his hat farther over his brow, and strode away. He went at once out of the square, leaving Zach to ruminate upon his words, or to laugh them away, as the mood suited him.

Zach tried to laugh them away, but the laugh did not rise readily to his lips, though he had been very fortunate in business that afternoon, and his brother had acted like a madman. He ruminated upon them instead, and walked toward his wharf—his City wharf—turning them over in his mind, and thinking that this brother of his was very eccentric and unfathomable. Strange, that his life should have been cast amid such odd people, whose feelings were not to be measured by the square and rule.

He would have done a great deal for that brother—he had done so, he thought, and it was folly for Teddy to turn against the hand that would have raised him, and rave about his blushes and his shame. Then he thought of him in the early days, of Teddy in the later time, offering to share his life with him and hopeful in him to the last, and he could see that that brother had ever been wonderfully prone to

set aside himself and help another. In a short while Zach felt low-spirited, but when he was in the thick of the crowd in the streets, and men hustled him in their progress, he went back again to the world wherein he had to live, and set Teddy from his thoughts.

He was getting rich; there was fair sailing on the deep waters for him and his; he could not idle time in dwelling on the actions of other folk. For him and *his*! Well, he had only his wife, and a child of a few weeks old—and the wife had talked nonsense about a separation from him. They were not interested in his career, but they did not bar his way to greatness, and he would work for them and himself. He was as happy as he had ever expected to be in business pursuits; he would make his happiness at his warehouses, whatever else failed him. His was a life apart from romance and poetry, but it was a life that the world should respect; he swore it to himself as he went along. Before him a prosperous career—every thing in his own hands now—and no fine feelings about gratitude to hold him down, or render him the slave of an idea. What did it matter if his brother were ashamed of him; had he not been ashamed of Teddy, and held himself aloof from him?

He found Mr. Tinchester waiting for him in the office at the wharf near London Bridge—waiting impatiently, and with no small degree of nervousness.

“Oh! Mr. Zachary, is it true that there has been a dissolution of partnership between Mrs. Henwood and you?”

“Good news and ill news fly apace,” responded Zach. “Yes, it is true enough.”

“Dear me!—dear me! And you remain the master of all this?”

“Yes.”

“Then I need not stand upon ceremony with *you*, sir,” said he. “I’ve been tired of this work some time—I’ve saved a little money, and I want a little rest in the country, before the trouble of the whole thing takes away my senses. I shall leave next quarter, Mr. Zachary.”

Zachary was vexed. He knew the value of the old and faithful servant, and he knew no one to replace him.

“You will think better of it,” he said. “I intend an increase of pay to the best of my staff—I can not afford to lose you, Mr. Tinchester.”

"Oh! sir, you are very kind, but I have had enough of business life," was the reply, "and I am a man easily contented. I was foolish enough to think once that Mrs. Henwood would—would have made a partner of me, but when I knew that that day would never come, I worked just as well, and as hard, by way of return for all her confidence. But it has told upon me very much—for it is a terrible business—and I can't stand it any longer. It don't look so ungrateful in me to leave you as it would have done to leave her, when she had these two big places on her mind."

Ungrateful! Even this old man talked of gratitude, and he had grown gray and husky in City service.

"We will talk of this another time, Mr. Tinchester," said Zach. Then he went into his private room, and turned the key upon all the vexation that he felt.

He went away homeward two hours afterward, with an extra degree of shadow on that face already care-worn with the responsibility of wealth.

CHAPTER VI.

WEARING OUT.

ZACH returned home that night in a thoughtful and unamiable mood—like a man who needed consolation, rather than a lucky fellow who had become sole principal of a great firm. With his rise to greatness—within an hour of his success—his brother had discarded him, and the man who seemed almost necessary to his business had asserted that he should leave next quarter. Neither of these events should have affected him a great deal; his brother and he had ever been apart, and what that brother thought of him did not make much difference; and his manager, though a shrewd man enough, could easily be replaced while good salaries were paid at Henwood's. Still he was worried; it had been a day of unrest, and he remembered for the first time that he had not dined when he found his dinner awaiting him at Stamford Hill.

He remembered also that he was not on good terms with his wife, when Lettice appeared not at dinner, and he speculated as to what had become of her, and then why he had

no appetite between the courses that he made an effort to struggle through with. This should have been a festal day, had all things gone well, and the dissolution of partnership have been an amiable affair; but he confessed at last that it was all very dreary—that he was surrounded by the dullest element that had ever depressed a man whose fortunes had changed for the better.

Zach lost his temper, and when Lettice finally entered—rigid and stately, after her new manner—he attacked her with his bitterest reproaches, and his cruelest sarcasms at the opposition which she had steadily maintained toward him. Lettice thought that she had made up her mind already to leave him; she had sworn by Heaven that she would not remain in his house, if he acted unfairly to her mother, and this was the last feather that weighed against the little chance of happiness they might have had. We have not space to particularize this quarrel between man and wife, and it would be unnecessary to the final working of our story. Suffice it to say that it was the fiercest and the worst of quarrels, and that it ended in two stubborn natures resolving that a separation was really better for them both. It had been talked of before; it had been threatened by one, and contemptuously assented to by another; but here on this evening the quarrel ended in a cool, hard, business-like arrangement of terms, and a future appointment at a solicitor's office.

It was all settled, and neither Zach nor Lettice was likely to give way now. Each had become impressed with the conviction that it was surely for the best that they should part; if she wished it, thought Zach, why, he was too proud a man to ask her to stay, or to believe that any good could result from her remaining; and if *he* wished it, thought Lettice, why, it was plain enough that he had never loved her, and that having gained his object with the business, it would be but a mockery to live with him. Let her go to her mother, and try in that way to do her duty—the one subject of contention between them at least no longer existed.

So in a quiet way, without any "scene," unshadowed by farther reproaches, husband and wife were put asunder by their own hard wills. Zach agreed to allow Lettice a fair sum of money as an annual income, to allow her the custody of the baby-girl as long as she wished—forever, if she liked!

—and Lettice covenanted, or rather her trustees, the family solicitors again, covenanted to indemnify the husband against the wife's debts, that wife who surrendered, there and at that period, all claims to "jointure, dower, or thirds."

All this a formal and matter-of-fact piece of business, but none the less heart-rending for it. Lettice wavered, even Zach wavered, over the parchment folios and government stamps; it was a death-blow to the romance of the thing, to all the past trust that they had had in each other. But the deed was signed and sealed, and Lettice and Zach parted in that lawyer's office—the former starting at once for Paris with her child, in search of the mother; the latter going back to his empty villa, to see how he should like it all to himself.

"Only myself to care for!" he might have cried with his brother in Upper Ground Street; and surely with himself only to please, there was little doubt of peace. It was somewhat of a novel sensation at first to feel so entirely his own master; but he never could shake off altogether the sense of loneliness that met him after office hours in that house—where every thing reminded him of her who had deserted him. He regarded Lettice always in that light now; he gave her all the blame, and set her down as the wife who had deserted *him*! She was to be answerable for all the harm that followed the disruption, for she had not been true to the vows spoken at the altar. He was very much annoyed with himself that he missed her; he had married her for money—that was true enough in most respects—but it forced itself upon him that he missed her, and he could remember, in these lonely days that had come to him, that she *had* loved him once, and that, with all her eccentricity, he had thought that she was a woman really suited for him.

But he set her very much apart from him, by hard study of his wrongs, by her attack on his principles, and her foolish defense of her mother; she had grievously offended him, and he disliked all thoughts that tended to any softer recollections. He studied to forget her, and possibly he succeeded. As time went on, he felt less irritable and restless; he plunged with more vigor into his business, and he made his business life answer for home, and wife, and child. He worked harder than ever, and became more stern and hard in

consequence; the difficulties that met him by the way relieved his mind from other cares; he submerged himself in trade, and by careful speculations and contracts of magnitude, the money in his hands made more money in its turn, and the golden harvest brought its consolation to him.

Three months after the parting with his wife—in the rude March weather, that interfered with Zach's contracts a little, for it delayed the ships and barges that belonged to him—Mr. Tinchester made his bow, and took down his hat from behind the office door for the last time.

Zach had made use of every argument to induce the old servant to remain, but Mr. Tinchester, though he parted not in enmity, remained exceedingly firm, even to an offer of an increase of wages.

"It isn't the money that I care about," he said; "it is the rest I want. I should not like to die here, and as I have saved quite enough to take care of myself, I really do not see the necessity of remaining any longer. I am getting old, sir, and you'll find many better than I now. Best wishes for the continued prosperity of Henwood's Wharves, Mr. Zachary."

Mr. Tinchester departed, but Zachary never found the better man to replace him. His deputy managers became a great trouble after this, and one succeeded another, each adding to the vexation of the master. He found men who were very clever, but exceedingly dishonest; he found honest people who were dull as lead, and dribbled at the mouth when driving bargains; he found respectable mediocrity, that took no interest in the business for itself, but was partial to punctual payment of its salary; he found careless managers, who let him in for losses caused by their own imprudence or forgetfulness; he found careful men who were so exceedingly punctilious, that they offended the best supporters of the business by their want of trust in them. Zach advertised extensively for the right man; offered large salaries; wasted time in searching for him; but he never came. A second Mr. Tinchester, by some cruel mischance, never took the onus of responsibility off the young master's shoulders, and Zach worked for the new manager as well as himself through the spring, summer, and autumn, till the winter came again.

All that long year he took not a day's rest, an hour's holi-

day; it was not safe, he thought, and he knew that it would lose him a portion of that money which had become still more dear to him with his intense pursuit. He was looking very ill, every body told him who had time to take stock of his looks; he even began to fancy, as he hurried over his shaving in the early morning, that he detected an extra thinness in his visage, and a shade or two more sallowness in his complexion. There had been a time when he was young and foolish, wherein he had been conscious that he was a handsome man, that he possessed a face so striking and intense in its expression—its intellectuality—that men and women singled him from the crowd, and asked each other who he was.

But he had outgrown any vanity that he might have had concerning his good looks, and it did not give him much pain to be told that he was losing them, and becoming very worn. His father had been a very handsome man, he had heard, and had lost his good looks early also—it was in the family, this rapid decadence of the exterior surface; why should he care while he felt well, and made money?—the world would value him much more for his riches, than for a face like a woman's. If he carried on that face but one expression now—an eager craving look for profit; if his eyes only lighted up at the gold and notes that fell in a fair shower about him, what mattered it? He was proud of his character; he had a name in the City for shrewdness, for ability in money-getting, for care in investing his money after he had got it, and such a character found its way to man's respect.

Let him become thin and sallow till the minimum was reached, and he should stop and harden, or dry up. He was very well in health, and nothing seemed to bore him or retard his progress to prosperity. If he were only less perplexed by his manager, and his clerks—if that old fool of a Tinchester had not been so readily content with his paltry savings!

Very well in health still, he considered, when his dinners became objectionable things to place before him, and he woke up regularly with no appetite for breakfast. He had never found time for regular meals in business hours; he had dined in town, taking his dinner when he could—and when he could not, missing it—and this erratic style of

meal-snatching told upon him suddenly, and robbed him of the little zest for food that he had ever had. This was the first check to him, and made him thoughtful; but he found, or believed that he had found, that it made no difference whether he ate or not, and that being the case, why should he pay any attention to *that*? It had always struck him that a man could subsist on a very little; perhaps he had learned the trick when he was a boy on tramp with his mother, and a penny loaf would last them both four-and-twenty hours in hard times; at all events, none the worse for lack of appetite—occasionally annoyed when he tried to eat and failed, and more annoyed to think that he had to pay the waiter all the same.

None the worse till in getting out of bed one winter's morning before the daylight had come—he was anxious that day to be down at his wharf by half past five o'clock—his knees suddenly gave way under him, and he fell. Simply an accident, thought Zach, as he picked himself up, and resumed his toilette; but he could not shake off the impression that he staggered a little all that day; and when he found himself once more on his knees before the week was out—the oddest position in the world was Zach Fernwell on his knees, too!—he began to consider that something must be a little wrong with the machinery of his system.

He could not believe that he was going to be ill—that was not likely. He had not eaten enough, after all, and this was the natural result; he remembered that when he was on tramp, he used to double up in this awkward and unbecoming manner. He cursed his memory the instant afterward that would go back to the days of that disgrace—he could not understand why he should dwell upon them always when he was a little “out of sorts.”

At business, at Henwood's, he discovered himself suddenly holding on by his desk, to keep himself upon his leathern chair; and when the room had ceased spinning round with him, he had some trouble to apply himself to the letter that he was writing.

“This must be looked to,” he thought at last—“if it keep on, it must be looked to.”

It kept on, and one day Zach drove off in a Hansom cab to the first physician in the metropolis. He would have the best advice that money would purchase, at any rate; he

never dealt in shabby material, and the best of every thing lasted the longest, he knew by experience. He should obtain the best prescription here, though he thought, with a sigh, that he should have to pay more than a guinea for it.

Zach submitted himself to the examination of "the greatest man in the faculty," keeping his glittering eyes on the man, meanwhile, and trying to read what he thought of him. Zach had answered many questions about his business, and his application thereto; he had impressed upon the doctor's mind the necessity of his keeping to work, lest any foolish scheme for change of air should be submitted to him; he wanted very good advice, but it must not interfere with the wharves."

"Your energy, and your incessant application, have been too much for your *physique*—you are rapidly wearing yourself out," was the verdict given.

"I must take it more easy, then?" suggested Zach.

"You must give it up altogether for a while," was the reply—"shake it entirely from your mind, as though it did not exist."

As though it did not exist!—give it up altogether! thought Zach.

"Sir, that is impossible," he said.

The physician reminded him of his critical state, and that it was dangerous to continue. This sense of weakness might pass away, but it would return again, if he took no rest, and worked too hard. It might be the death of him.

"I can't leave," said Zach.

The physician was interested in this young man's love for his trade, and he took time in treating the matter in a friendly light. He spoke of Zach's friends as though their name was legion, and bade him trust in them, and leave all to them, till his health was sufficiently restored to take his place again at the head of affairs. Zach listened patiently.

"I am aware that no business succeeds so well in the absence of its principal," said the doctor, in conclusion; "but you must remember that a loss of money is always better than a loss of health, be the loss great or little."

Zach paid his fee, and took his departure. What was to be done now? he thought—what could he do after such preposterous advice? Trust to his friends!—he, who had not a friend in all the world, and who did not know two per-

sons fitted for his trade, who had been twelve months waiting for *one*!

He called at a chemist's in his route, and had the prescription made up, taking his medicine on his way home in his cab, as though it were an *elixir vitae*, that would give him back his own old strength. He did not return to business all that day; he would take a whole day's rest, and proceed home at once. That would be giving the advice for which he had paid heavily a very fair trial, he considered.

He was worse the next day, and began to think that the physician had been mistaken in his case, and recommended him an abominable mixture wholly inapplicable to his condition; or else the chemist was a fool, and had made up the mixture incorrectly. He would stay at home one more day, and have the medicine compounded afresh at the chemist's in his neighborhood; and when that was done, he sat shivering before the fire, comparing the two bottles of tonic, and fancying that he saw a difference between them, thereby assuring himself that one or another was improperly concocted.

There were troubles in the house that day—quarreling among the servants, and missing rate-papers, which the housekeeper had not filed, and for the amount of which the collector called on that identical day again, when he was trying the specific of rest. Then a wretch, suave and well-dressed, sent in a card, and obtained admittance to him, only to solicit his subscription toward a testimonial to the clergyman of the district—a man on whom he had never set eyes in his life. In the afternoon the kitchen chimney caught fire, and the sweep and the man with the parish-engine arrived at the same time, with two hundred boys behind them, and fought for precedence on the door-step; and when all was peace, and he was dozing in his chair, he was aroused for good by the braying of a formidable volunteer band, marching at the head of its indefatigable corps—the 44th Tottenham Defensibles.

Zach thought that it was the house that added to the extra weight of responsibility upon him—it was a bright idea, that gave him ease. All this time he was managing that large house as well as his business, and he suddenly remembered that it had always been a trial to him. The servants were a nuisance, and the establishment was not a necessity.

Still he had an objection—he could not tell wherefore—to break up his home, and go into lodgings, and that objection was strongest upon him that day when the place had worried him so much. It was like home—a shadowy semblance of home—and he could not shun it altogether. He would find some one to take the sole management, and not disturb him with the details. He went to bed full of this plan; he rose full of it also. His mind had reverted to Mrs. Evvers, his former landlady, and Arabella, her daughter; he remembered that they had made him very comfortable in their lodging-house, and he believed that they would come and take care of his establishment, if they were living still.

That would be one weight removed from his mind, he considered, as he went to business that day. Business had been going on badly in his absence, of course; orders neglected, things commissioned to be done still remaining undone, letters unanswered, and the manager nowhere. He felt better putting things to rights, it revived his energy till the afternoon, and then there he was holding on to the desk again, and anathematizing his giddiness. He would try complete change now—a week's change altogether. The affairs at Henwood's could not go irreparably wrong in a week. He left with that resolution, telling the sub-manager that he should be away a day or two at the farthest, and then took a cab to Mrs. Evvers's, New Kent Road, to settle that little matter of his house.

Arabella opened the door to him—the Evverses were doing badly, and had discharged their servant for good; the lodgings were empty, and the house stood disconsolate. Zach's faculty for observation told him this at once.

Arabella looked at him in ignorance for a moment, then screamed, and fell against the passage wall.

"Oh! dear, to think it should be you! How you've altered! How *dreadful* white you are!"

Arabella had altered too, for the matter of that; she had become more thin, and lost a little of her bloom, like a girl harassed by a sharp mother, and by thoughts of keeping single all her life. But she had not changed like Zach.

"I have come to my old friends to help me in a dilemma," said he. "I hope they will."

"I'm sure they will, sir," answered the girl, whose heart was touched at her old flame's general appearance.

Arabella was right. Mrs. Evvers was ready to assist for a fair consideration. Arabella could mind the house in the New Kent Road, and should things get brisker there, why, there was an aunt round a back street who could step to the rescue. That matter was arranged, then, and Zach gave a shadowy outline of his present position and future intentions before he went away.

Mrs. Henwood, his wife that is, was away, traveling for her health, and the house was a trouble to him. His health had been a little impaired, and he was going away in search of change for a week himself. Mrs. Evvers must return with him, and assume authority that very night.

"La! how well I remember your going away for the benefit of your health three years or so ago," cried Arabella; and then she blushed very much at the speech, and wished that she had not said it. For three years ago she had made a hero from this unheroic material.

Zach took Mrs. Evvers home, and left for Yarmouth the next day. He remembered that he had found benefit in that place before—and though it was winter-time now, when the air was a trifle too keen to be enjoyable, still he went away very sanguine as to the good results to be obtained by change of scene.

Taking his business into consideration, the holiday would cost him more than it would cost any man living, perhaps; hundreds of pounds might pass from his hands while he was away; but he was weak and ill, and it would be worth all the money he confessed, to feel as strong as ever!

CHAPTER VII.

TRYING TO GET WELL.

Was this the first time in Zach's life that he had shown any instance of gratitude? Yarmouth had restored him to health three years ago, and he was grateful enough to return to it, and patronize the town. A little gratitude, and a great deal of the instinct for self-preservation, placed him on the Norfolk sands again, and faced him with the fierce sea-breeze.

It was very cold and very boisterous weather for the

health-seekers, and all the pleasure-swallows had flitted away in the beginning of last September. Zach found it dull and miserable enough, crawling about lonely parades with a London business on his mind ; but he remained his week there, and felt all the better and the stronger for it. How that week was passed he never knew ; how it had been possible to spend it, staring at the angry sea, talking to wooden-visaged beachmen, struggling with the wind at the corners of streets, he could never call to mind when he was at home again. He had seen the physician half an hour before he took his train at Shoreditch Station, and he had been enjoined to set his business away from him and his thoughts, and though he had failed in the effort, still he had tried very hard.

The effort had done him no harm, and in the long evenings in his furnished lodgings he tried to read, and, failing to discover any amusement in his books, he would think for a while of his wife, his brother, Mrs. Henwood, Martin Wynn, and of others who had left a less indelible impress. He liked to think of them all in the time when they looked kindly at him ; it was a liking to be preferred to that lonely room, with the wind rustling every window in its sash, and his sense of desolation complete and heart-chilling, and he passed from his business for a while to the old days. Then the quarrels, separations, distrusters, followed the better thoughts, and it became a wiser plan to dwell upon his business and chase them away—not completely, for there would return strange speculations as to what they were all doing now apart from him—whether his wife was *very* happy with her mother, how big his child had grown, and what had become of an unselfish brother ? He dreamed of his wife and brother frequently during that week ; once he woke up in the night so certain that Teddy had called to him from without there on the landing-place, that he sat up in bed to listen.

At the end of the week he was better and stronger then, but beset by an anxious craving to give himself no longer holiday—to get back to that life from which to stand apart was to feel like a man cut off from the world. He was well enough now—change had done him all the good that had been prophesied—only the prophets, over-wise, or over-careful, had spoken of rest for months and years, as though time and money were nothing to the sick man.

At the end of the week then Zach was back again in London streets. He had read his lesson, and had resolved to take more care after this ; not to sacrifice himself to his business, but to let even a few pounds flit by him without making unheard-of efforts to secure them. Forever after this warning, a man to be more careful !

He had returned home just in time, he discovered ; the clerks were robbing him ; the general manager was a fool or a knave, it was doubtful which at present ; no one had been particularly interested at the wharves during his absence, and so money had been lost, and business neglected, as he had imagined that it would be. He took his losses philosophically for once ; and he did his best to obviate any in future. He went carefully at his books for the first few weeks ; he tried regularity of diet, by way of a change ; he sat not up late at night, studying the contracts, and he was better—almost as well as ever, he thought !

It was that house that had been upon his mind, he was sure. All those servants that robbed him and fought among themselves for the spoil ; all the petty vexations of an establishment left without a mistress. *That* was off his mind, and he could apply himself to his own legitimate work at last ; Mrs. Evvers once entered his room with a protest against the insubordination of her officials in authority under her, and Zach had stopped "that nonsense" immediately. Mrs. Evvers had power to give them warning, send them out of the house at a moment's notice, replace them by those more civil, if she were lucky enough to find them ; he would not listen to complaints which her absolute power could readily redress.

This house of his reminded him very much of the old days when he was equally ambitious, but not so fortunate. He had had no worry of housekeeping then ; he had had his mild excitements, his room to himself, and Arabella to flirt with occasionally—all those desiderata might be coming back again.

Arabella had come back, if not to flirt with him, at least to cross his path, and talk to him occasionally. There were many excuses, if she wanted any, to come to Stamford Hill, and there was an aunt to mind the house in the New Kent Road while she was absent. Surely it was natural that she should like to see her mother now and then.

That mother and she had gathered from one source and another many fragments of Zach's history, magnified, after the manner of fragments picked up on basement floors, into a history that resembled the truth in certain particulars, and yet was a burlesque of reality. They knew that Zach and his wife had quarreled and separated, and as the wife had left the house to the husband, and was no longer heard of, she was in fault, of course, and there would follow presently a divorce, and Zach's freedom. It was possible that the "law's delay" was preying on "Mr. Zachary's" health, and Mrs. Evvers pondered over the possibilities of life, and thought how strangely things might come round after all!

Arabella scarcely knew what to think. She would let things take their course, and not interfere too much herself. She had been always fond of Zachary, and if Zachary were to be believed, he had been always very fond of her; her one little romance to brighten the crudities of lodging-house keeping had been this slightly-made being into whose presence circumstances had once more thrust her. Arabella was a girl who solaced her leisure with much novel-reading; moreover, she was an ambitious girl, and love and ambition went together in this instance, and revived in the woman the past and rash fancy of the girl.

Still, let it be said to her credit here, that she entered into no deliberate scheme to win Zach's regard—that she was even doubtful of the story, or some parts of the story, which had separated the husband from the wife. She was a woman on guard in many respects, but she took no pains to keep out of Zach's way, and took a great deal of pains to look her best when she drifted into it. A woman not likely to come to any harm, but still one who might go too far in her thoughts of the old lover, and lay the foundation of much future unhappiness.

Zach was pleased to see her in the house, for it helped the old times nearer to him, be it again recorded. He was glad of the excuses that brought her before him, that kept her in conversation with him about the days that had been, and he thought, or the devil whispered to him, that she was still very pretty, vain, and weak.

This was the mild excitement to which we have already drawn attention, and he wanted excitement after business hours—the pleasure even of fanning the vanity or hopes of

Arabella Evvers. Still, he meant no harm to her, and he often contrasted her ignorance, her childishness, with the stately woman who had defiantly passed away from his home, and who could have made that home so happy.

The winter was verging on to the spring again; he had been in London about three months, and had only felt a slight weakness at times—nothing more. He thought of the folly it would have been to take that old physician's advice *in toto*, and keep entirely from business. He thought that it was very easy to advise, and take five guineas for every scrap of information; but if any one had advised that doctor to leave off advising, and pocketing his heavy fees for twelve months or two years, what would he have done in his turn? Why, remained at home, and grown more rich with other folk, industrious and saving like himself.

Congratulating himself on feeling better, then, and working almost as hard in pursuit of riches, when his manager—about the tenth who had stepped into Mr. Tinchester's shoes, and found them an exceedingly bad fit—resigned, and went abroad. Extra work for a few weeks for Zach, but, luckily, so much more like his usual self, that he could bear the strain of it. He set to work with all his might to replace the vacancy, and fulfill the duties of his manager as well as his own; he slaved by night and day; he oscillated between one wharf and another, glancing up at the old home in Upper Ground Street when there *was* a minute to spare in transit; he left off his new and wise habit of taking his meals regularly; he ran after those who seemed suitable for the post he wished to fill; he held fifty interviews a day with gentlemen who responded to his advertisement, and there began to steal upon his face that worn expression, which presaged so much.

"Oh! dear, Mr. Henwood!" exclaimed Arabella, meeting him at the door one of these late nights, when she was hastening away to secure the last omnibus homeward—"how bad you are beginning to look again! I hope you're taking care."

"I hope I am, Arabella," he said, laughing; "I will try not to frighten you so much next time I come home. You are going away early?"

"No—it is very late."

"I have not had much fresh air to-day," he said; "may I see you to the omnibus?"

"I don't know," she said, blushing, and hesitating—"I don't think it is right. I don't know what mother will say."

"Oh! bother the mother!" cried Zach—"I sha'n't eat you up going along!"

He turned and went back with Arabella. He was in good spirits that day, and did not feel ill in the least, despite his bad looks. He had made a thousand pounds at one sweep by a rise in banking shares, and he was excited, and inclined to be extravagant in his conduct. He fell back, as it were, that night into his old position as regarded Arabella Evvers, and she, keeping one eye open—the weather eye, we believe, it is called—suffered him to do so, thinking of his future freedom, and loving him in her heart almost at that time as much as ever. It was a pleasant bit of flirtation, if scarcely a discreet one, or fair to Lettice Henwood, and Zach, in his high spirits, would have kissed her before they turned the corner where the omnibus was waiting, had not Arabella jumped away from him, and assumed suddenly all the propriety suitable to the occasion.

"Ah! you are frightened at me now?" said Zach, with an assumed regret in his tone—"it wasn't always so."

"It isn't as it was, that I can see."

"No—you're right," replied Zach; "you must excuse me. I am a trifle too frivolous to-night, for I have been lucky to-day, and made no end of money. Right again, girl—it isn't as it was!"

"It ought never to have been allowed," said Arabella, fretfully—"it lowered me. It lowers me now to be seen walking with a gentleman like you—for you are a gentleman."

"Thank you for saying so—I am very much obliged."

"And you took a lady for a wife, and though she wasn't worthy of you, and played you false, and went away, yet—"

"Who?—my wife? Who told you any thing about her?" he asked, sharply.

"I've heard a great deal naturally. People will talk."

"And tell lies," added Zach; "don't believe all you hear against her. She was a good woman, with a bad temper—that's all."

He marched away in a very different mood after this; he

was angry with himself for having paid attention to his housekeeper's daughter—with his housekeeper's daughter for speaking so unceremoniously of Lettice. He went straight to his room, after letting himself into the house, and called himself a fool—a thousand times a fool—as he prepared for the rest that was long in coming to him now, after its old aggravating habit.

It never came that night, after all his preparation. It was very strange—stranger still that the worry of a day's business—the turmoil of a day's good fight—should have made so little impression on his mind as to be chased away by thoughts of Lettice, and that ignorant young woman with whom he had flirted that evening. He rose early, with the intention of walking to business—walking the heaviness out of himself before he sat down to his desk for the day—and was standing with his hand on the lock of his room door, when he came suddenly on his knees again, bringing his chin against an adjacent chair, and nearly biting his tongue in half. Zach remained in that position, and swore at his own weakness—what the deuce had he stopped to think about? and what had his tongue wanted hanging out of his mouth like an idiot's?

There was no mistake in all this. These were the old symptoms, and he would not be so foolish as to neglect them this time. He altered his mind about walking to business; he got up, and went cautiously down stairs, to write a letter at once to Mr. Tinchester, whose address he knew well. He offered him a large sum—a sum even greater than his deserts—to come back and take the management of one of the wharves and warehouses; he implored him as an old friend to come; he confessed that his health was in the way of his business, and that he could not do without him. He even hinted that a share in the profits of the business should be his manager's, if considered a better mode of payment.

Zach waited a fortnight for an answer to this letter; he was coquetting with his work, then, instead of with Arabella Evvers; keeping guard over his weakness, and not taxing himself more than he could help. Early on Saturday afternoon he thought of running down to Brighton until early on the Monday morning, and on Saturday morning Mr. Tinchester's reply was delivered to him.

Zach broke the seal, and read almost what he had feared

from the long silence. Mr. Tinchester dated from Paris—which was strange enough; he regretted very much his inability to assist Zachary at this juncture; he recommended his young friend to sell one of the wharves rather than risk his health too much; and he alluded to an indisposition of his own in the shape of gout in one foot, that kept him a prisoner in the French capital.

Zach cursed Mr. Tinchester as he threw the letter into his waste-basket; then he worked hard for the rest of the morning, and gave orders that a cab should be waiting to take him to the London Bridge Station at half past two. Before that time he had experienced one or two ugly fits of giddiness and sickness. He must be off at once, he thought; he had not been a minute too soon in deciding on change of air. He was in his Hansom cab at half past two, rattling over London Bridge. Before the Southwark side was reached, his hand was dashed through the trap in the roof with a precipitancy that led the cabman to rein in his horse at once, and glance down at his fare. Zach was huddled in a corner of the cab now, looking very white.

"Back home," he cried, "to Stamford Hill—Hazeldean Villa—drive as rapidly as you can. I am—very ill!"

The cabman turned his horse's head, and drove Zach at a good pace homeward. Before Zach's house he found it necessary to dismount, and assist Zach to alight, and help him along the garden path.

"Not much the matter, I hope, sir?" said the cabman cheerily.

"Broken up for good, that's all, my man," answered Zach.

"Can I do any thing more for you, sir?"

"Yes. Drive to Dr. —, Bayswater, and tell him to come at once, at any price! I must see him!"

Even then, fighting his way up stairs with Mrs. Evvers to assist him, he sighed over the expenses he was about to incur; and his first thought, while he lay dressed upon the bed, was the next week's business, with no ruling agent over it, and only a parcel of clerks left to do their worst.

"Write—to Mr. Tinchester!" he cried to Mrs. Evvers—"write again!"

"Lor' bless you! I can't write, sir! Do keep quiet till the doctor comes—there's a good, dear soul!"

"Some — one — some one who can write!" he shouted

—“find somebody down stairs before I go out of my mind!”

When Dr. — arrived, there was a maid-servant in the room acting as amanuensis for Zach—and Zach lying almost like a dead man on the bed, dictating in a hoarse whisper all that he had to say, and to implore.

“Doctor, don’t stop me in this!” he entreated; “it is very pressing. I—I must have that letter sent off before the half past four post.”

“Is it nearly finished?”

“Yea.”

The physician waited, and the missive was dispatched. Then the doctor looked at Zach, and asked the old questions—remembering Zach after a few moments, and reminding him of the advice by which he had not profited.

“What is the matter with me?” Zach asked.

“You have overtaxed your strength again—and you have run down like a clock.”

Like a clock overwound, and the spring of which had broken suddenly, damaging the mechanism forever—but he was a thoughtful and merciful man, and did not say so.

“What is to be done?”

“Rest—rest—nothing but complete rest. If you excite yourself in any way it may be serious—and it will infallibly retard recovery.”

“But—but—good God!—the business!”

“Where are your friends?”

“You asked me that before—I haven’t any.”

“No friends—relations—any one?” said the wondering physician.

“No, sir—they are all gone!”

And then Zach for the first time experienced the full sense of his loneliness. The doctor warned him not to fret about his friends, any more than his business, and went down stairs to give instructions to Mrs. Evvers, about a nurse for the stricken man, about the care—great care—that was required to save him.

He was still instructing when Zach’s bell rang violently. He and Mrs. Evvers went up stairs, together, to find the patient gesticulating and moaning wildly.

“I shall die like this—I feel I shall. It is all up with me. I’m utterly broken down, sir. Send—send for him, and ask

him to come back to me—his brother Zach, sir—tell him that, please!”

“Of whom are you speaking?”

“My brother—a go—good fellow—Upper Ground—Street—Number—three hundred—and six.”

“I will send some one at once.”

That some one was sent, was a long while finding out the place, and then was met by the following piece of information:

“Teddy Fernwell!—what, our bright Teddy, as we used to call him? Oh! he’s been gone away from here these twelve months.”

CHAPTER VIII.

WAITING.

WITH a feverish impatience Zach waited for the return of the messenger from Upper Ground Street. He was seized with a strange desire to have his brother at his side, to trust wholly to him, and ask him to take care of him until he was well again. Surely he would do as much for the younger brother as he had done for the father dying in Drag’s Court; he was not a man who bore malice in his heart, and he would forget and forgive all the faults that had stood between them both.

Zach felt terribly weak now—weak as a child. He felt like a man who had met with a serious accident—fallen from a house or something; then like a man waiting for a fit to seize him, or paralysis to strike him motionless. It was a sudden break-up, and it boded ill for him; he had watched the physician anxiously, and adept as that man was in disguising looks, still there was a gravity upon his face that made Zach’s heart sink. He might be going to die—that might be his sentence, in return for disobedience to all the rules that had been given him concerning his health—he might die there in that room, without one face he cared for bending over him. Then the business; the money that he had made, and that was put out at interest in a hundred ways, which no one would discover; the absence of any will or testament conveying it to any one, and then his complete weakness, which made a child of him indeed!

The messenger came back at last, and delivered the bad news to Mrs. Evvers. Mrs. Evvers was almost afraid to communicate it to Zach; she was putting on her bonnet and shawl to ask farther advice of the surgeon who had been found by Dr. — to look after Zach, when the sick man found strength to ring the bell again—and to keep on ringing.

"Who was that knocked just now?" he asked.

"It was—well, sir—it was—"

"The boy come back from Ground Street. Don't tell me a lie about it!" he cried fiercely.

"Pray don't worrit so, sir. The doctor says we mustn't let you worrit, but keep you cool and comfor'ble."

"The boy—from Ground Street," gasped Zach; "wasn't it?"

"Yes, sir, it was."

"And my—my brother? Won't he come?—won't he come near me!"

"Yes, yes, I dare say he would, sir, if we could find him. But he's been gone away more nor a year, and nobody knows any think about him—and people have been calling upon him and trying to find him, like ourselves. He'll turn up in good time, if you keep cool and comfor'ble. I'll be a mother and a brother to you till he comes."

"He's dead!—I'm sure he's dead!" cried Zach; "not heard of for twelve months, and no one to know—any thing about him. Oh! Teddy, Teddy, if I could only see you again—just once more!"

He burst into a fit of passionate sobbing, that was terrible to hear; he dashed his hands before his face, as though conscious that his weakness was unmanly, and unworthy of him; he groaned and writhed upon his bed, and Mrs. Evvers ran out of the room in affright to fetch the doctor, for whom already she had put her bonnet on.

The doctor found him still and stony enough, taking him for a dead man at first sight, and starting back for an instant as he entered the room. Zach was not dead, however—although his excitement had been too much for him, for the nonce. He was weaker after that; on the Sunday he was desperately weak, wild in his manner, and rambling in his speech, like a man to whose brain a fever had stolen. They who watched him could not understand him, or make him

understand; and when Arabella came into the room, with tear-filled eyes, and asked if he knew who she was, he replied, "Lettice," and then turned away his head. Arabella Evvers constituted herself his nurse; she would have no interference in that resolution, and perhaps it was well for Zach that he had one who loved him a little, watchful at his side. He knew nothing of her presence there till he woke as from a stupor on the Tuesday morning, clearer in his faculties, but more like a child than ever. He looked at her very gloomily as she bent over him.

"I hope you know me to-day," she said, with a forced and faint smile.

"Yes—I know you."

Then he looked anxiously round the room.

"No one has called?"

"No one."

"What is to-day?"

"Tuesday."

He tried to count the days that had intervened since he was stricken down, and failed. The effort was too much for him, and he closed his eyes.

Arabella was a tolerable nurse, but somewhat indiscreet and garrulous. She began to ask if she could get him any thing to eat or drink—if he fancied any thing?

He shook his head.

Would he like to hear her read any thing?

He shook his head again.

"When is the doctor coming?" he asked, when she had desisted from questioning him.

"He will be here this morning."

"Has he—has he told any body that I shall die, Arabella?"

"Good gracious!—no. It isn't likely that a young man like you will die. Oh! don't talk like this, Mr. Zachary. It's too much for me!"

"I shall die, I know!" said Zach, with a heavy sigh.

"You'd better talk about the business, than have such thoughts as that."

Then Zach gave voice to the most remarkable assertion of his life.

"I don't care about the business—let it go!"

Arabella was departing from the room, when he called her back.

"Give me a pen," he said.

There was a pen in an inkstand on a side table, and Arabella took it to him. He tried to hold it between his fingers, and then let it drop upon the carpet.

"No—it's no use. Ah! well," with another sigh, "it doesn't matter much."

He asked no more questions. He had forgotten his letter to Mr. Tinchester, and when Mrs. Evvers reminded him—somewhat imprudently—of that piece of dictation, he made no reply for several minutes.

"Has he come?" he asked, at last.

"No, sir."

"Why should he?"

He was silent till the doctor arrived to see him. The surgeon had looked in before the physician's advent, but Zach had feigned sleep, to avert the questions that might be put to him. When Doctor ——— was standing by his bedside, he said,

"Well, I am going to die. Why don't you say so?"

"I—I really can not say that. Your life is not in my hands!"

"You know that I shall never leave this bed alive. Why don't you tell me this at once?"

"You are in a critical condition—but there is hope yet."

"Well, there may be. I hope there is; I don't want to die!"

"Have you no one whom you would like to see?" asked the physician.

"Ah! I understand!" said Zach, quickly; "in case that I am right in my surmises. You can not find me my brother?" he asked, with his old fierceness predominant.

"No."

"Has any farther inquiry been made?"

"Yes. A Mr. Wynn, of Griffin Street, has been communicated with."

"And he knows nothing?"

"Nothing."

"Don't let that man come here," said Zach, shuddering; "he preaches too much—he is too good for me to meet!"

"Who—Mr. Wynn? I am not certain that he is aware of your illness."

"If he comes—give orders—give strict orders that I can't be seen."

Zach betrayed so much excitement that the doctor saw the necessity for those orders also.

"A very good man—in his way," murmured Zach; "but I can't face him."

"You will pardon me," said the physician, "but have you not a wife, whom you would be glad to see?"

"Who told you that I had a wife?"

"The housekeeper."

"My wife would not be glad to see me, at any rate!" said Zach; "let her keep away. I don't know where she is—I communicate with her solicitors once a quarter—she is abroad somewhere. If you could—if you could only find Teddy, sir!"

"That is your brother?"

"Yes. Advertise for him in the papers. Edward Fernwell, late of Upper Ground Street. Say—say—"

He paused, and had to struggle with his breath for a while, keeping one hand upon the doctor's wrist, lest the physician should go away before he could speak again.

"Say—Zach forgets the evil that has stood between two brothers, and is very sorry—for the past, and—and anxious to find the one friend who was faithful to him for so long!"

"It shall be inserted in all the papers."

And it was, leading to much speculation among the curious, but bringing back to life no Teddy Fernwell.

It brought Martin Wynn to the house, as might have been anticipated, and there Martin was met by the startling news that he had been expected, and orders had been left at the door to keep him out. Martin walked back very full of thought, and quite at a loss to account for this stern interdict; there was much mystery with these Fernwells still, and all respecting them was part of the old incomprehensibility. If he thought more of Teddy Fernwell, and held him, for reasons that will be presently explained, more highly than ever in his estimation, still he was in doubt as to Teddy's intentions respecting *him*. Teddy had disappeared suddenly from Upper Ground Street, Martin knew, also; and there was a sad conviction in Martin's mind that the old pupil resented the suspicions that had been cast on him, and was hiding from all friends. Possibly he had already reached his brother Zach's house, and it was he who had refused him admittance there. Well, it served him right; he

should have had greater faith in his own teaching, and in Teddy Fernwell! He should have had his daughter's faith!

Meanwhile, Zach's impression was that Teddy had seen the advertisement, and it had had no effect upon him. Teddy had done with him forever, just as he said that he should, and the younger brother must die alone in that house. When another week had passed, he was still convinced that he should die; he became no stronger; he slept less; he was tormented more by his isolation; he grew more irritable. The physician even annoyed him; he was making a show of him, Zach told him one day, when he brought a brother physician to see his patient, and to talk over him lying there, as an interesting specimen of a man who had worked himself to death.

He had only one friend, and that he scarcely acknowledged, in Arabella Evvers. Only one who was constant in her ministry, and tender in her watch of him. A young woman with no right to nurse him, but who tended him with her heart in the cause, and perhaps loved him more tenderly and unselfishly when she felt assured with Zach that he would die. Then all the romance in her came into full flame—a plant of rank luxuriance, that grew apace, and shadowed many after days. The fostering of so wild—and yet so pure—a passion, was to bring its retributive justice on her, when she was in Kent Road lodging-house again. She got over it, and married four years afterward, but it was not till those years had passed that she forgot Zach Fernwell. Some women are very weak and willful, but they are faithful in their weakness and willfulness to the false idols they have reared. She, at least, never loved Zach so well as when she was sure that she should not marry him.

Arabella even took excursions on her own account to the wharves; she knew that Zach used to be very anxious about them, and work night and day there, and if Zach took a turn for the better, he might wish to learn suddenly how the business was progressing. But her missions were wretched failures; the clerks did not know her, and treated her with incivility, and all seemed confusion and insubordination there. One man, who she learned afterward was the head clerk, asked for her authority in coming there, and stated it to be his intention to call on Mr. Fernwell with full particulars of the progress of business in a day or two—"he was

the only gentleman who at all treated her like a lady," Arabella told her mother. But that gentleman never came, and it was nobody's business to look after him. Zach had completely thrown the business overboard; the "ruling passion" was not a strong one in his greater weakness, in this instance of "breaking down." He was too ill to care about business, or what became of it. Let the whole world scramble for it after he was dead, if it liked—he had no interest there. His wife's friends must look after the interests of his wife and child; he could not hold a pen, and were he capable now, he did not think that he would write a line on behalf of all those who thus studiously avoided him.

"Never a man, Arabella, was left to die so completely alone as this," he said one evening, when he had given up every hope of seeing the old faces.

"Still, not without true friends, Zachary."

"Thank you. But you are not like the others," he murmured ungratefully, "not like my brother—who might have been charitable and more forgiving at the last. He does not know—he will not believe how ill I am, or—I think that he would come."

"You need not be quite alone," said Arabella nervously, "there is your—your wife. Why do you not let her know? Let me write," she added with a spasmodic jerk.

"You don't know her," said Zach, "she is firmer and harder than I was. She would not come."

"Try her."

Zach shook his head.

"Or she would come with her reproaches for the past—and I can't face them. But Teddy would not do that—not he!"

"Oh! if we could find him!" cried the girl.

She had imbibed from Zach this wish for Teddy Fernwell—this concentrative interest in the one man standing aloof from them. Every night her last prayer was that God would send Teddy Fernwell to his brother.

"I used never to speak of him when I was at your lodgings," said Zach mournfully, "though, if you remember, he came once, thinking that I was in disgrace with my aunt. Ah!—he could come then. But now he won't!"

Very, very weak was this man stricken so low—this man that had seemed wrapped in self as in a coat of mail. He

was just strong enough to raise his hand to his eyes and wipe away the tears that had sprung there—strong enough to feel ashamed of his weakness, and turn his head aside to hide the quivering of his lip.

"He'll come yet, perhaps," consoled Arabella; "I don't think that he has heard of your illness, myself. I don't think—oh! dear me!" she gasped in a lower tone, that Zach did not catch, "oh, dear!—oh, my!"

For the door had opened noiselessly and closed again, shutting in with her a very tall young man, with black wiry hair, and a pale excited face. A young man who raised his hand by way of caution to her, and hushed her slowly into silence—almost into stone.

"You don't think that he has heard of my illness?" repeated Zach, with his face still averted—"well, I'd rather think that than that he kept away of his own free will. But, Bella, isn't it strange that I—"

He paused, and seemed to struggle to explain. He had already talked too much, Arabella thought, for one day.

"Isn't it strange," he went on, "that there should come to me, lying here, all the boy's love for him—the love that I never had again after I went to Aunt Henwood's? Is it not like a miracle, girl, that it should all steal back like this?—that I should feel just as the poor, wretched boy felt whom he shielded with his greater strength. There was no one like him then, I used to think; and now," he added, with the old cry, "he won't come near me!"

He covered his head with the bedclothes in his grief, and the man at the door passed with his cat-like steps across the room, whispered in the woman's ears, "Break it to him by degrees," and then dropped into a chair in the shadow of the bed-curtains.

"You mustn't go on like this, Zachary," said the girl, also excited; "he will come near you. I'm sure he will—very soon now."

"Sure!"

"Yes, yes—he's on his way; keep strong—he has sent word that he is coming."

"No—has he?—*has he?*"

Zach turned round in his bed to make sure, by her face, that it was all true. His innate shrewdness told him more than had been detailed to him, or his eagerness led him to

the truth at once, for, with a new strength, that was but momentary, he pulled back the curtain near him, and disclosed his brother, rising from the chair there as from the dead.

"Keep quiet, Zach—no nonsense, there's a good little chap. It's all right now."

"Oh! Teddy—I'm—I'm so glad that you have come!"

CHAPTER IX.

TEDDY RESUMES HIS OLD OCCUPATION.

ZACHARY FERNWELL said no more that night. He had unduly exerted himself before his brother's advent, and the meeting, though partly prepared for, was too much for him. He lost his voice entirely, and the surgeon was sent for in a hurry to know what new phase of the complaint was this.

The surgeon, not knowing any thing about it, took refuge in the satisfactory explanation of "Nerves," and recommending quiet, and great care, and incessant watch, departed. Zach remained conscious, however, and the loss of his voice did not distress him. He became quiet enough, but he lay and watched Teddy, moving about the room, arranging things to his satisfaction; and when Teddy came near him, to make sure that he was awake, or that he wanted for nothing, a faint smile flickered over the sick man's face.

In the morning Zach's voice returned to him, and he would have exercised it in a hundred questions had not Teddy stopped him. The elder brother stood over him, and issued his mandates as though he were master there.

"It's no good, Zach," he said, cheerfully; "you'll keep your mouth shut till the doctor comes. It's taking up an old trade of mine to be nurse again, and I'm a nurse who will have his orders attended to. So—shut up, young fellow!"

"But—where have you been?"

"Among a heap of foreigners, to be sure," said Teddy; "getting sun-burnt, and trying to grow a mustache, which got into my mouth, and made me cough so awfully that I shaved it off again, though I was looking uncommonly handsome under the nose, Zach. But, until the swell physi-

cian comes, and tells me what I may say, and what I mayn't, I'll not utter another word. And if you begin again, I'll shy something at you!"

He spoke with the rapidity and brusqueness of the old Teddy—the boy Teddy. It was part of his plan to cheer Zach, and it succeeded. Zach was looking infinitely better in appearance when Dr. — arrived.

"Ah!" said the physician, immediately upon entering, "here's an improvement to-day!"

"He's come, sir," answered Zach, like a pleased child, as he nodded his head toward his brother.

"Oh! you're the Teddy, then, that there has been such a fuss about?" said the physician, good-humoredly.

"My friends have had a bad habit of making a fuss about me all my life, sir," answered Teddy.

When Dr. — went out of the room that morning, Teddy followed him, full of inquiries, all affecting the one great inquiry—Would Zach get over this?

"I have been in great doubt as to his recovery," replied the physician; "every thing has been against him until now. He is in great danger still, but with care, good nursing, and absence of any thing from his mind calculated to depress him farther, I think that we shall save him now."

"We shall, sir," said Teddy, executing a most volatile gambol in the hall—"I think we shall, sir, too."

Teddy knew that it would not be his fault, if Zach did not recover. He had faith in his own powers, and Zach had faith in him. He set himself to nurse Zach, to cheer and sustain him with all that power that he possessed of brightening the surroundings which we have seen in the early days, before Martin went to Drag's Court. And Zach grew better from that day—slowly better—coming back by very minute degrees to a sense of his position—to an anxiety to live and get strong once more.

The first sign of his old self was evidenced in his inquiry concerning that business to which he had shunned all allusion during his illness. This was a week after Teddy had appeared at Stamford Hill, and when Zach had been promised that he should leave his bed next day.

"I suppose it has almost collapsed?" he asked.

"It's in a muddle, certainly, Zach, but you won't mind?"

"I will not fret, at all events," he answered, with a faint smile.

"When you were asleep the day before yesterday, I went over to the wharves, and tried to understand the business, and the contracts, and the books. I played the great man there, and let every body know that I was Mr. Henwood's big brother looking after the little brother's interests."

"Thank you, Teddy. It was time some one looked after them."

"But it was hard work to look in the right direction, and I could not do much good."

"How could you?" answered Zach; "it was the one study of my life, from the first moment I entered Henwood's. I killed myself in mastering the *minutiae* of it all—I worked my heart out, and broke down."

"You went at it with a vengeance, Zach, certainly," responded his brother; "well, you must take things more quietly after this—not be quite so anxious to—"

"To make money," concluded Zach, seeing that his brother paused—"no, I shall never care much for money again."

"Ah! hate the sight of it soon, I dare say!" said Teddy, with a humorous twinkle in his eyes.

"I don't want to be poor—to be a burden to any one, of course," explained Zach, slowly; "but I shall never fight hard for profits—perhaps," with a short laugh, "it is for the reason that I shall never have the chance, for Dr. — tells me that I shall not be the same man ever again."

"I hope not!" answered Teddy.

"Ah! you mean not the same cold-hearted, unnatural wretch that success made of me?—well, I hope not that," replied Zach; "but you must keep my soul from narrowing again, Teddy."

"When you are strong—"

"Don't I tell you that I shall never be strong?—that I shall always be like a delicate girl, to be looked after, and taken care of?" cried Zach; "you must not think of leaving me any more. I have thought so much about that, and about you. Teddy," he said, more anxiously, "I have thought how we two, separated so long, should now live and work for each other side by side to the end. We are both lonely men—let us set shoulder to shoulder, and work onward—brothers at last!"

He stretched out his hand to Teddy, who wrung it in his

own, but did not reply for several minutes. At last he looked at Zach steadily, and said—

"You are very kind—it is a generous offer, but I don't think that I should care about this business, and," with affected lightness, "I don't exactly know how you are going to turn out yet. If you were to become very poor, now, or if you were to meet with a heavy loss in *money*—"

He paused, and Zach said lightly—

"I could bear that loss."

"Honor bright?"

"Yes—honor bright," repeated Zach.

"Then I'll try you," said Teddy, "so screw your courage up."

Zach stared at his brother, but though he did not flinch much, he certainly flinched a little—which, after all, is not a great deal to say against this penitent.

"My visit to the wharves yesterday appeared to create no small astonishment—even dismay. Your head clerk at the City place objected to my interference."

"Hammond?—a sly rascal!—I never liked him. He would have troubled me very much, if I had been disposed to feel troubled concerning any thing."

"Exactly. Well, he's off."

"Gone, do you mean?"

"Yes; he absconded after I had left, taking a great deal of money with him, and finishing off by imitating your signature on a banker's check. I suppose that you will be a loser, at least, of twenty thousand pounds."

Twenty thousand pounds!—the sum that he had fixed upon as the value of Mrs. Henwood's share in the business—the amount which he had indirectly paid to Mrs. Henwood, and paid so easily!

Zach's thin fingers interlaced themselves together, and cracked with the tension that he put upon them. He was getting better, certainly, for the loss of his money was troubling him. And yet he was growing better in another way also, for, meeting his brother's anxious looks, he laughed.

"Don't look so despairingly at me, Teddy—Rome wasn't built in a day, and I shall never wholly get over my bad habits unless you stay with me. There, let the money go—we'll not think any more of it just now."

"Yes—we'll finish it all off at once," said Teddy; "we will go into business matters for the next half hour, if you please."

Teddy and Zach went into a committee of ways and means at once. The elder brother saw the impossibility of Zach being fit for business for many months to come, and the impracticability of leaving the wharves in strangers' hands. Zach had only one friend in the world, and he, sitting there, was unsuited for the task—ignorant of City ways and City men. Zach was readily persuaded to dispose of one wharf out of two, and as Henwood's Wharf in Upper Ground Street was well conducted, and, at least, was not a loss just then, it was proposed to leave it for the present in the hands of the old-fashioned, but honest sub-manager there, and jog on quietly till Zach was strong enough to give his orders. That matter was arranged, and as we shall not recur to it, the reader may be glad to know at once that Zach got clear of one half of his business at a loss that was not wholly ruinous, but that did not leave him very rich. On the Surrey side of the water less profits were made, and only a simple kind of storehouse-work was conducted.

"Henwood's Wharf in Upper Ground Street can bide the time of its proprietor," said Teddy.

"Of its proprietors," corrected Zach.

Teddy would argue that point on a future day.

"I don't think that it will ever suit me, Zach," he said, "or that I shall be fit for dodging about the streets, looking up creditors. I have a capital trade on my hands, and some people are good enough to think that I'm clever at it. Five or six pounds a week are not to be despised."

"Five or six pounds?" cried Zach, despairingly.

"Ah! you were a fellow always with high notions," said his brother, laughing; "but, then, you have a wife and child to work for."

"What?" said Zach.

"A wife and child to work for," repeated Teddy, firmly; "we are not going to have any more nonsense about deeds of separations. We'll have nothing but good deeds after this."

Zach lay in bed, astonished at this sudden intrusion upon him of a subject that was distressing.

"Don't speak of this," he muttered.

"Oh! yes, I shall."

"She's a firm, hard woman, who—"

"Who would have been here with me, if she could have found the strength, which your letter to Tinchester took away from her."

"What do you mean?—did the letter reach Tinchester?—who told you?—when did you see Lettice?"

"Ah! now we're getting curious, and that's a good sign. Your letter to Mr. Tinchester went dodging about after him, for he had left the hotel where you first wrote to him, and taken his gout somewhere else. But, luckily it found him, and he sent it to Mrs. Henwood, and Mrs. Henwood, after frightening her daughter with it—her daughter, who was ill enough before, poor woman!—brought it on to me, quietly at work studying designs."

"She knew where to find you."

"Oh! aunt and I are the best of friends," said Teddy; "I don't know what she sees in me now, but she don't like me out of her sight too long, and she's always inventing excuses to give me money, which I won't take. What a dreadful thing, Zach, to have such a horror of capital! Sometimes I think that I am not any more sane than you are."

Zach was too excited to smile at this.

"If you don't wish to drive me mad, tell me what you mean about my wife? My illness has alarmed her, you say?"

"It added to an illness which had overtaken her before—she had been fretting, or something, I believe. She has a bad habit of fretting at times, her mother says."

"What has she to fret about now, I wonder?" said Zach—"she is free, and her own mistress. I did not treat her unhandsomely."

"Not so far as *money* was concerned," said Teddy, "which is saying a great deal. And as we have been saying a great deal too much to-day, I'll take the liberty of withdrawing."

He left Zach to think of his wife, and of the hints which he had somewhat nervously conveyed, concerning a better time for them together. He was anxious to see Zach begin his new life, with his wife at his side again; that was

part of the task which he had set himself in coming there. He went down stairs into the front room, where Arabella was dusting and arranging ornaments, to think of it also—seeing Arabella Evvers quite at home there, put him in mind of another task, more painful to his big heart, that he had intended to set *her*.

Arabella was singing to herself as he entered, and so absorbed in her singing, that she jumped when he addressed her. They had become good friends, these two—possibly for the reason that Teddy's character was very easy to read, and to admire.

"How happy we are this morning, Miss Evvers!" said Teddy.

"Oh! dear, what a fright you have given me!" she answered, pausing, with a duster in her hand, to reply—"yes; we all have a right to be happy now—with him getting on so fast."

"Ye—es," said Teddy, in a hesitating manner; "and those who are dear to him, like me and his wife, especially."

"I'm sure you are not happier than I am," she said, very quickly and thoughtlessly, ignoring the mention of the wife altogether; "you can't feel happier, sir, than all my hopes—all my prayers—have come true like this."

"All your prayers for him?" said Teddy—"come, you're a good girl to think so much of strangers."

"Strangers!" exclaimed Arabella, indignantly—"I only pray for those I love with all my heart—those who have been kind and good to me, that is," she corrected, with a blush, divining, for the first time, the true reason for his questioning.

"I hope you wish for my brother's happiness?"

"Yes."

"He can only be a happy man again, with all mistakes corrected and atoned for, poor fellow," said Teddy, "and it was a grave mistake that separated him from his wife."

"She wasn't fit for him!—she wasn't go—"

"Did you ever see her?"

"Only once," exclaimed Arabella, with a toss to her head, "when he was married."

"I have seen her," said Teddy, "and I find her a somewhat impatient, but a very true-hearted woman, loving her husband dearly, sorrowing for the causes which separated

them, grieving at his obstinacy, and — though she is not inclined to tell me so—repentant for her own. To my brother in his prosperity she might have remained always too proud to come to him; but in his trouble, when she is able to drag herself here, she will take her rightful place. You and I, both friends of Zach, must make this step an easy one for her."

"I can't help you!" cried Arabella, losing the little self-command that she had ever possessed; "you bring back his own misery with that wife—I'm sure you do!"

"I don't see that."

"You make—every body—wretched! Why can't she keep away now? She has kept away long enough for—for every—body's misery!"

Arabella burst into tears, and buried her face in the dust-er. Before she had recovered herself, Teddy had drawn down her hands from her face, and was holding them in his.

"Miss Evvers," he said, "you have been very kind to Zach in your attendance, and Zach and I, I am sure, will ever remain your debtors; but let me advise you honestly to go away. His wife may be here to-day, or to-morrow; the letter I received this morning informed me that she was better, and anxious to see her husband, and just at present your position here may embarrass her and you."

"Do you—do you dare to think that there has been any harm between your brother and me?" she cried, fiercely snatching her hands from him, and looking the injured heroine at once.

"No, I do not," replied Teddy—"I think too highly of you; but I see in your stay here danger to yourself."

"Danger!" was the scornful repetition.

"Danger to your peace of mind, Miss Evvers," said Teddy—"to that peace which ought to be yours, and which uncharitable folk, putting the worst construction upon every thing—it's a way they have—will surely take from you. This has all been a kind—a sisterly interest in my brother, I know; but in his trouble, like a brother of your own, let me kindly urge upon you the necessity of leaving him."

"*He* wishes it, I know! Why don't he say so?"

"He has not spoken of this, Miss Evvers—I have taken this unpleasant business on myself, for your benefit and his."

"Very well," with a quivering lip—"I will go. He's better, thank God, and I can't do any more good. Oh! sir," with sudden energy, "I did love him, but I loved him best of all when he was dying, as I thought, and I wished that I could change with him, and—"

"Hush! hush!—you will be sorry that you've told me to-morrow," interrupted Teddy—"keep such thoughts to yourself; you're a young woman, and should not confess all this to me. You are deserving of a better fate than to care for a man that has a wife living—shake it off, girl—crush it out with the woman's pride that, I am sure, you have, or you're not the woman that I take you for."

"Yes—yes—I will crush it out—in time."

Poor, silly girl!—she did not look as if she had crushed it out when she came into that room shortly afterward, with her eyes red with weeping. A true sorrow in this parting, but an unnatural one, for which we do not ask the virtuous reader's sympathy.

"I'm a-going now, sir," she said—"I see it's best."

"That's well. That's brave of you," said Teddy.

"He was asleep when I went in to bid him good-by, and I hadn't—I had—had—hadn't the heart to wake him. Tell him that I've gone, sir, and give my—*duty* to him. Don't say any thing to mother, but that I have gone."

She went slowly and reluctantly out of the house, and Teddy stood at the door watching her departure from Stamford Hill—from the pages of this history. "The bold hussy, she ought to have known better!" cries *materfamilias*. Well, we are all of one opinion on that point. Shall we record the verdict—"Serve her right!"

Teddy did not express an opinion even to himself; he looked very sadly into the open street, but whether he was thinking of her share of blame, or Zach's, did not appear from any outspoken words. He was still reflecting, however, and *might* have spoken, when a hired fly drove up to the door, and disturbed his train of thought.

"Lettice!" he cried, and ran down the steps, and along the fore-court, to confront—Christie Wynn.

CHAPTER X.

LETS IN THE SUNSHINE.

"OH! Teddy, you wicked fellow, where *have* you been?"

It was an odd greeting, but it unnerved Teddy Fernwell more than a sentence of deeper import, or more graceful construction. It was uttered heartily, and by a young woman who betrayed no small excitement at the sight of him. It was a genuine protest against the motives which had taken him out of England. Christie corrected herself before he could reply.

"We have all wondered where you were so long—father and Aunt Polly especially," said this little hypocrite—"why could you not have called, and bidden us good-by?"

"I was in a hurry to get away, Miss Wynn—Miss Christie," he said, the instant afterward, "and your father, if you remember, had not a very good opinion of me then."

"Oh! how can you think so, now?"

"Well, I will not think so now," said Teddy, cheerfully, "for now I can face him and explain, if he wishes for an explanation. But he was in the right—he always is—to distrust a man who could not give a fair answer to his questions. Who is that in the cab?"

"Your brother's wife."

"Ha!—she has come, then?" cried Teddy; "she called on you at Griffin Street, first of all? I—I hope that she hasn't said—any thing—about me?"

"Nothing to your discredit, at any rate," replied Christie; "but she has told your story for us, and Aunt Polly don't think any the better of you for it."

"Indeed!—how's that?" said Teddy, not seeing the joke with his usual quickness.

"Because she has always had the best opinion of you, and the greatest faith."

"She said so once—with *you*," was the meaning response to this, "and I felt stronger forever after that night. I—"

"Will you speak to Lettice now? She will wonder what we are talking about."

Teddy, thus called to order, hastened at once to greet his sister-in-law, and assist her from the carriage. A French *bonne*, with his niece in her arms, followed Lettice from the carriage to the house.

"How is he?" Lettice asked at once of Teddy.

"Better," answered her brother-in-law—"gaining strength with every day. Have you courage to face him, and own your share of the blunders that have come to pass in this house?"

"Yea."

"Then I must give him courage to face you," said Teddy; "he must have no sudden surprise—where's the little one?"

"What are you going to do?"

"Play a practical joke on old Zach," said Teddy; "wait in the parlor, you two, till I come down again. I'm as full of mischief as a monkey."

"Mischief or happiness?" asked Lettice—"you who find your happiness in other people's."

"Oh! get out!" said Teddy, taking the infant in his arms; "don't try to make me think too much of myself."

He went up stairs with a blush upon his honest face; he marched boldly into Zach's room with the child in his arms, and Zach woke up to stare with amazement at him.

"Zach, I did not tell you that I was married," said Teddy, "and settled, with the usual encumbrances, of which you may take this one as a specimen."

He sat down by Zach's bedside, and put the child almost into his brother's arms.

"You don't mean this, Teddy?" said Zach; "but—but what *do* you mean?"

"Well, this is the first of the home faces back again to make home happy, Zach," said Teddy; "in a little while—say a day or two—your wife will follow it, if you wish it."

"I can not wish her farther unhappiness with me," replied Zach—"and she was never happy here."

"You must try to make her so," said Teddy; "we begin afresh—the whole of us—from this day. I haven't come back for nothing, I hope."

"I can't ask her to come back now—I am a fretful invalid."

"You were more fretful—decidedly a more unpleasant fellow—when you were in the stirrups, Zach. Here, I can't nurse this young one all day. Catch hold!"

Zach was strong enough to hold the child in his arms now, and had he not been, there was no help for it, for Teddy had hurried from the room. It was a marvel of a child, this one, for it was not scared at its father's white face, on which a smile was resting—it was a child of wonderful self-possession, and betrayed at that instant more nerve than Zach did.

Teddy reappeared just as the child had begun to whimper at the strangeness of its position, and when Zach, left to his own resources, was trying if the hammering of the spoon against a glass handy to him would keep its attention distracted from convulsions.

"It has been very good, Teddy," said Zach, breathing freer at his brother's advent; "but this was a dangerous experiment."

"Now, see this young one walk," remarked Teddy, taking the child from the bed; "you would not believe it possible without you saw it. She can walk as well as you can."

"I dare say she can do that," said Zach, ruefully.

Teddy walked the child across the room, and out of the door, and Zach leaned on one elbow to watch the process, and was inclined to laugh hysterically at it.

Teddy gave the child to the nurse waiting without, and then returned to his brother.

"The child takes to you," said Zach—"but then every body takes to you!"

"Very kind of every body," said Teddy, in reply; "and so you could not believe that I was married?"

"I don't see why you should not be married," mused Zach, "only I have always fancied—I don't know why—that you would marry Christie Wynn."

"Ha! ha!—that's a good joke," said Teddy, with feigned lightness of demeanor—"whenever did you find time to *fancy* that?"

"I used to hope so."

"You? why, then, you *had* time to think the best for me occasionally, Zach."

"I found time for that," was Zach's reply; "but you are evading the subject. Where is Lettice?—will she come?"

Teddy looked at his watch.

"Well, yes. She will be in this room at six o'clock. Try to think of what is best and kindest to say, meanwhile."

And at six o'clock to the minute Lettice came into the room, nervous and trembling, like a woman who had done wrong in leaving him.

"Oh! Zach, I am sorry that we have been apart so long! If you will only say so too, it will make me a good and patient wife forever."

"I will think only how glad I am that you are here, and of the new life which we will share together."

"The lower life," said Lettice, "for you have been unfortunate, I am told."

"Yes, somewhat unfortunate—but all the better for that, Teddy tells me. And I believe all that my partner says."

"Partner!" and Lettice turned to Teddy with a smile, to which he responded, although he shook his head good-humoredly.

"We'll talk about that another time," he replied, as he went out of the room, and left this strange couple to themselves.

He went down stairs into the drawing-room, somewhat nervously, and was there confronted with a new-comer—the man who had been the first to save him, and, strangely enough, the first to distrust him.

"Mr.—Mr. Wynn," said Teddy, "I am glad to see you."

"And yet you ran away from England, and cost me no end of trouble in searching for you to no purpose," said Martin, "for I could not take your loss patiently, after all."

"Sir, shall I tell you—"

"Mrs. Henwood's daughter has told me every thing, Teddy, and that spares you a long story," he said, "and leaves me but one thing to ask *you*."

"What is that?" said Teddy, nervously.

"Your pardon," he replied, "for I am very much ashamed of myself. There, if you will not forgive me, I will ask my daughter's intercession. My rebellious daughter!" he added, with a meaning that brought the color to Christie's cheek.

"There is nothing to forgive, Mr. Wynn; but it makes me the happiest fellow alive to think that you and I have no mystery, and no distrust between us. You, to whom—"

"That will do," said Martin, quickly—"no more thanks—they pain me, Teddy, for you are the hero of this story. Christie, he evades his forgiveness of me—will you ask him, for the sake of the old times he ran away from?"

"No, no—I pardon freely all that there is to pardon," cried Teddy; "and I don't see any thing to forgive, really."

"And you are the happiest fellow alive, eh?" said Martin, as they shook hands, with *nothing* wanting to complete your happiness?"

"Nothing but a glimpse of Miss Polly now."

"Nothing but *that*?"

"Well—no, sir," stammered Teddy, flushing up to the roots of his hair, and trying to keep his eyes from lowering—"what else can there be?"

"Oh! you mustn't ask me," and Martin Wynn indulged in one of those hearty laughs, which had been more common to him years ago than at that later period.

The question was not repeated by Teddy; he fancied that he was not alone in his embarrassment, and he hastened to change the subject, and yet to think of it very deeply while making headway, or trying to do so, with other topics less mysterious. But when they were alone together—Martin Wynn and he—as happened presently, Martin, to his surprise, returned to the subject.

"Nothing to wish for in the world?—nothing wanting to complete your happiness?" said Martin, thoughtfully—"well, you have changed, Teddy."

"Not much, sir," said Teddy, with a laugh.

"With a better knowledge of each other—with a love for the old days in our hearts—I did hope that you would have proposed, Teddy."

"Proposed, sir?—*proposed*, did you say?"

"Proposed to come back to Griffin Street, and take your old place at my right hand, as the son whom I love best. I shall never believe that you have forgiven my foolish pride, or sunk that foolish pride of yours, unless you come back to me."

"My pride, sir—"

"Ah! it is the pride that apes humility, Teddy, but it stands between you and me yet—an ugly barrier!"

"Mr. Wynn—you forget—you—"

"I forget nothing. I am prepared," he said, dryly, "for

all consequences. There, the truth is," he blurted forth, "you're so abominably modest, that if you won't ask me to give you my daughter, I must ask you to take her off my hands."

"Sir, I—"

"Yes, I know. The shadow of the goal, and all that *bosh!*" cried Martin; "you have said it before, but don't aggravate me any more with that sentiment, for it's false and unreasonable. I take a man as I find him—and I find him," suddenly clapping a hand on Teddy's shoulder, with a vehemence that staggered his eager listener, "honest, true, unselfish, grateful, and all that I could wish for in a son. If you do not love Christie, now—if you can look me in the face, and say that you have outlived your love—I will not trouble you any more."

"It is not possible to say that," murmured Teddy.

"Then, upon my honor, I don't think that you have a right to make every body miserable by walking up and down by yourself, raving of a past which you have outlived. So, Teddy, come back to Griffin Street, and chance it!"

"Where—where are you going?"

Mr. Wynn had seized his hat, which he had brought some time ago into the drawing-room.

"Time is very valuable with me just now, and I can not stay any longer," said Mr. Wynn; "but I heard that you were here last night from Zach's wife, and I thought that I would sacrifice a little time to run over here to speak to you. Good-by."

"But Miss—Christie, sir?"

"Well, she can't walk to Griffin Street by herself, you know!" and with this piece of information, Martin Wynn darted out of the house. We hope that this marqueterie-worker *was* busy at home in Griffin Street—surely we have not caught our truthful Martin Wynn, in this last chapter of our history!

Martin Wynn's daughter did not walk to Griffin Street by herself. Teddy Fernwell formed her escort—Teddy, who could afford to leave his brother in as gentle hands as his own had been. Teddy and Christie went away together very nervously, for Teddy, despite all Martin's assertions, was afraid still, and Christie considered that her father had not acted with due decorum in running away to Griffin

Street without her. But they were both unromantic people the reader is aware, and after a while they sobered down, and did not miss Mr. Wynn much. They had a great deal to say to each other, for Teddy was anxious concerning the progress of Martin's marqueterie, and Christie overwhelmed him with questions concerning his life and studies in that Paris, where Mrs. Henwood and Lettice had discovered him. He objected to this constant stream of questions; she did not give him a moment's rest; in all his life he had never remembered her so talkative. It struck him at last that she was fearful of a pause, and then, out of sheer obstinacy, he tried to obtain one by answering in monosyllables, and finally, even Christie was at a loss what fresh topic to suggest. She had heard all concerning Mrs. Henwood, how she had altered for the better, too, and was Teddy's patroness, and for Teddy's sake, or for the sake of his future, had resolved never to marry again, though she had only received an offer last week from Mr. Tinchester—an offer made in a bath-chair, owing to the gout still being in the way. Christie had heard all concerning Lettice, and Zach, and their child—every thing about Teddy's work in Paris, and yet there they were, not half way home yet, and nothing farther to say to one another.

Something to say at last, however—a something that lasted to the end of their long walk together—to the end of their lives. Very plainly said, and very plainly answered, as befitted two prosaic folk, with their hearts in their throats.

They had been walking together for two or three minutes in silence, when Teddy startled her by his hoarse voice.

"Christie," he said, suddenly, "it was not true that there was not any thing wanting to complete my happiness, although I told your father so to-day. Of course there was *you*—as there always has been, as there always will be, unless you will have me for a husband?"

Christie looked down, and walked faster, as Teddy went on. But she did not ask him to stop.

"I thought that I should never have the boldness to ask you, for I knew—no one better—how unworthy I was. But I think that the past is far away enough, and I—I—love you very dearly!"

"I think," was the abrupt answer, "that I can believe that."

"Then you will have me?"

"Yes," she answered, "I will have you, Teddy."

Teddy pressed her hand to his side, and poured forth his thanks in her ear. He grew wondrously eloquent on the instant, and he told all the story of his love over again, all his struggles with it, and the resolutions made concerning it, broken, happily for both of them, on that auspicious evening.

They had been, these two, so long in love with one another, that the promise once made between them, rendered them like old lovers, who had been courting all their lives. They could proceed on together full of faith in each other, and confident in their power to make the future all sunshine. Before they reached home they wondered why they had kept silent so long, each knowing where true happiness might be found.

"But you were so firm, Teddy, that you frightened me," confessed Christie. "Oh! the dreadful things that you have said!"

"Who told you?"

"My father, to be sure. My father, who has always wished our marriage—I know now. Even, I believe, when I nearly quarreled with him for the first time in my life, and came with aunt to Upper Ground Street. Fancy me quarreling with my dear father, and about you, too, Teddy! See what a bold young woman you are going to marry!"

They were in high spirits now, these two. There was no effort to disguise their happiness—they could have walked on hours longer in these busy streets—full of their love for one another, forgetting every thing but themselves. Forgetting Zach, who was beginning a new life from that day, and with whom Teddy never entered into partnership. For Teddy found a business partner in Martin Wynn, and left Zach to the care of Lettice—looking in very often to make sure that Zach was not growing fond of money any more, and remonstrating, always with effect, with the pale-faced, delicate man, whose business energy had nearly killed him, and whose brother's love came back with his weakness, and never went away again. Forgetting every thing but themselves, even when they were in Martin Wynn's shady doorway, and for the first time in his life Teddy clasped the maiden in his arms, and kissed her.

"I hope it isn't a dream, Christie," he said, "that I shall not wake up in Paris! Let me hear you say again that you will have me for a husband."

"Ah! and glad to get you," was the arch reply, "after all these years of waiting!"

She was in his arms again, with her bonnet crushed out of all shape against his chest, when Polly Wynn opened suddenly the door, and she and Martin Wynn, both waiting for them, stood in the passage looking out.

"Just as I thought!" cried Martin Wynn. "Just as it should be!"

"God bless us!" ejaculated Polly; "to think that we are all going to be happy at last!"

THE END.



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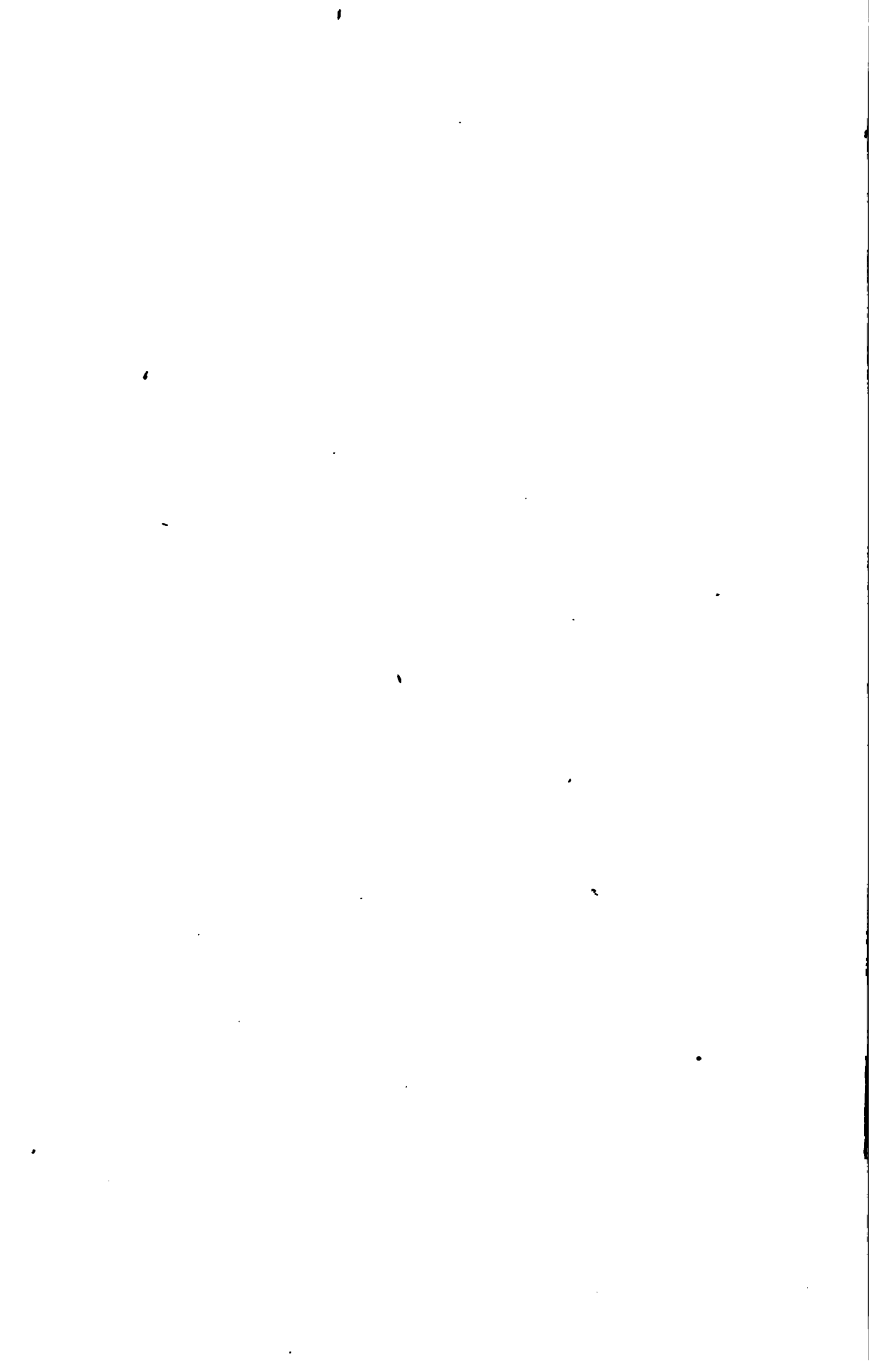
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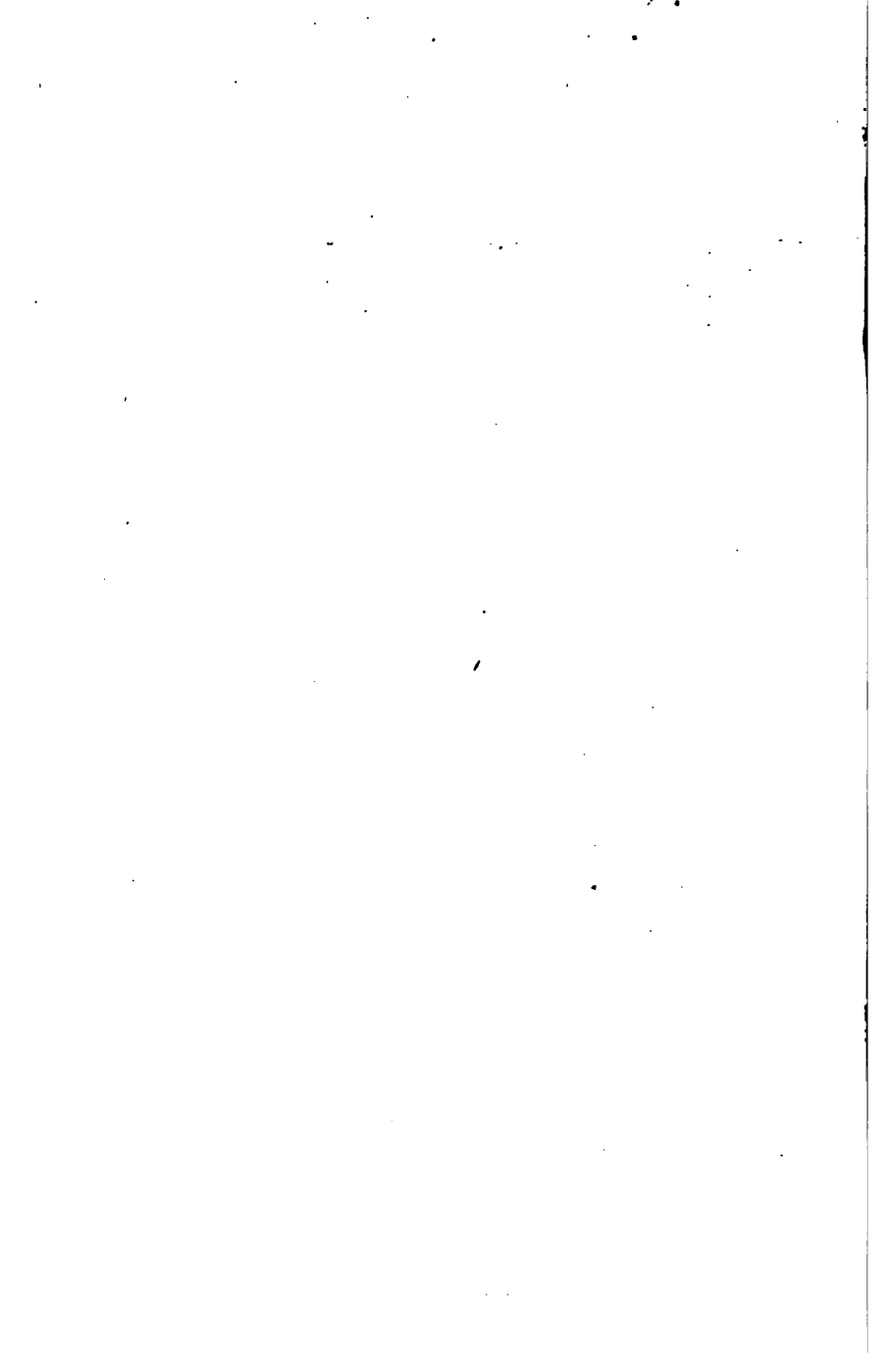
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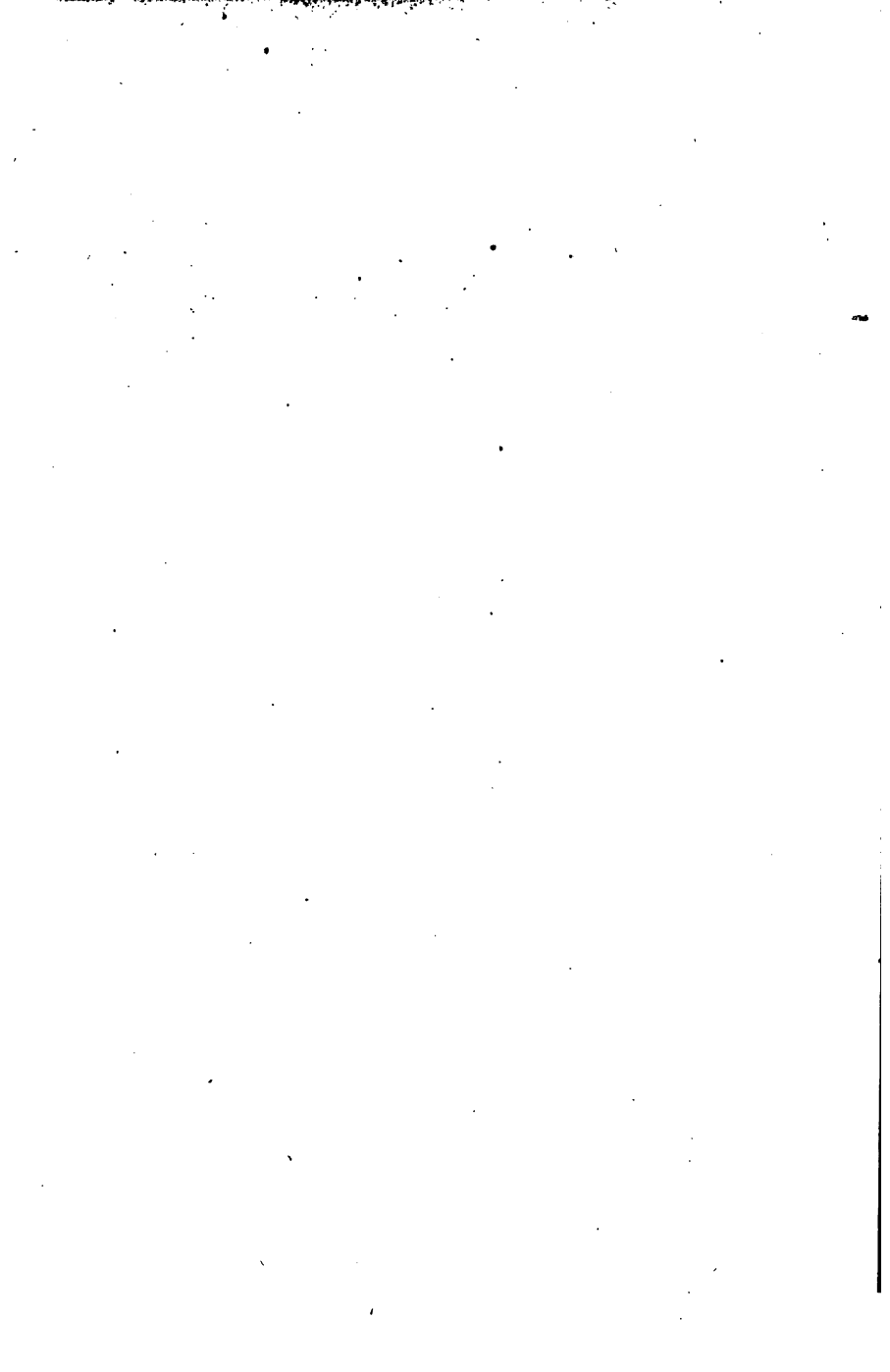
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